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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8175th meeting

Tuesday, 6 February 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alotaibi	(Kuwait)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

Working methods of the Security Council

Letter dated 24 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/66)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

Working methods of the Security Council

Letter dated 24 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/66)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of Security Council Report, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I should like to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/66, which contains the text of a letter dated 24 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I would like to welcome to this meeting Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations.

I now give the floor to Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin: I congratulate you, Mr. President, on this prompt fulfilment of the commitment Kuwait made as a candidate to highlight the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council.

It is a privilege for Security Council Report to be invited to brief the Council for the first time. The declared mission of our organization is to advance the transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council. For a little over 12 years now, a small team, first headed by a former Permanent Representative who had served on the Council, Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand, has been able to report publicly and independently on the activities of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, thanks to the cooperation we have received from all its members. That has included following closely both the Council's discussion of its working methods and their evolution in practice, and the four research reports on working methods we have published over the years, we hope, have made a contribution to institutional memory. The adoption of last year's note by the President S/2017/507, which represents a further achievement of the sustained efforts of Japan during its successive terms chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, provided a trigger for the most recent of our reports.

Some recent developments in the Council's practice that are now codified in note 507 certainly seem to us to be advances in transparency and effectiveness. The move to earlier election of non-permanent members was of course a decision of the General Assembly, but the subsequent decision of the Council to invite newly elected members to earlier observation of Council meetings has been a significant contribution to their ability to prepare for membership. The commitment to earlier designation of the chairs of subsidiary bodies allows for the more effective handover of those responsibilities. The undertaking of informal consultations regarding those appointments jointly by two members — understood to be one elected and one permanent member — rather than designation by the permanent members alone, represented a compromise in negotiations, but some improved recognition of the voice of elected members in the allocation of their responsibilities. Security Council Report seeks to make its own contribution to the preparation of elected members by offering its knowledge and experience — including on working methods — to any and all of them.

Note 507 declares, in its first paragraph, that the members of the Council are committed to implementing the measures in its annex. Yet as one of the Council's then members observed in the last such open debate,

agreements may be reached but then are simply not implemented. I want therefore to focus on some areas of stated agreement that, in the opinion of Security Council Report, would, if implemented, contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the Council.

Previous open debates display repeated concern regarding the operation of the penholder system. It is a relatively recent practice, which Security Council Report has witnessed becoming entrenched during our short lifetime, and Member States that have returned to the Council after a decade or more of absence have noted the closing down of space for initiatives of elected members. The joint statement of six elected members from six regions in the October 2015 open debate (see S/PV.7539) noted that the system has

> "diminished the opportunity for wider Council engagement, especially by the elected members" and "cuts across the principle of collective responsibility that underpins the Charter." (*S/PV.7539, p. 8*)

Since 2014, notes of the President have institutionalized penholdership as a recognized, if informal arrangement, yet without any process for the Council itself to designate or review its allocation. Note 507 reiterates that any member of the Council may be a penholder, and also that more than one member may act as co-penholder. But in practice three permanent members remain today sole penholders on the overwhelming majority of country situations on the Council's agenda. Initiatives by elected members — on the humanitarian aspects of the Syrian conflict, on the protection of medical personnel — have shown what they can achieve, but remain all too rare. Co-penholdership would surely be a way of drawing more fully on those who chair the relevant sanctions committee, or have regional or other strong expertise on a country situation.

Closely linked to the penholder system is the manner of negotiations, which Security Council Report observes closely and reports on. The quality of negotiations and their outcomes are of supreme importance to the effectiveness of the Council. The latest note 507 addresses this more fully than its predecessors. It stresses that drafting should be carried out in an inclusive manner that will allow the participation of all members; that penholders should engage in timely consultation with all members with openness and flexibility; that there should be at least one round of discussions with all members; and that penholders should provide a reasonably sufficient time for consideration by all members. Moreover, there should be informal consultation in an early manner with the broader membership.

This might seem an obvious statement of good practice, but it is far from being the reality we have often observed. As one of the then members described it in the Council's last open debate,

> "[p]enholders routinely take zero drafts straight to meetings of so-called experts. This precludes any real effort at building genuine consensus on the key policy questions to be considered. Non-penholders have to choose between accepting a text largely as presented, or risk being accused of torpedoing important documents if they wish to make substantive policy proposals. Those practices are neither effective, sustainable nor respectful of the perspectives of other Council members." (*S/PV.7740, p.9*)

The year 2016 saw the greatest-ever number of non-consensual resolutions in the post-Cold War period, and in some cases this explicitly reflected not just political differences but unhappiness with the negotiating process. In 2017, other than the high number of vetoes — the highest since 1988 — the Council achieved greater unanimity, and it is to be hoped that this reflected better negotiating practice.

The quality of negotiations is never more important than when the Council is adopting or revising the mandate of a peace operation, and in this context troop- and police-contributing countries have a special stake. Our most recent report tracks the long history of efforts to improve the Council's engagement with such countries, which began as far back as 1994. It is depressing to me, as a former member of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, to contrast the repeated commitments to enhanced interaction over two decades with what our report described as a lack of effective dialogue generating frustration on all sides and affecting mandate implementation. Given the Council's current focus on strategic reviews of peace operations, and the serious crises faced today by so many operations, there could not be a more important time for the Council to give effect to the commitments made again in note 507 to timely consultations, information-sharing and more interactive and focused informal consultations among

Council members, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries.

Note 507 seeks to encourage, in a number of ways, information from the Secretariat being presented in the most helpful manner and greater interaction with its briefers. However, during the negotiations on the note, members were unable to agree on a reference to situational awareness briefings — the most recent effort to find an appropriate format for the Council to receive early warning of situations that may require its consideration. At a time when the Council and the Secretary-General are focused on the prevention of conflict, it seems important that Council members should reach agreement among themselves and with the Secretariat on how the Council wishes to be kept well informed and therefore to be ready to engage promptly on emerging threats to peace and security.

For several years now, Security Council Report has had the privilege of accompanying almost all Council missions and informing the wider membership about them in real time. That experience makes us firm believers in the value they can have, in their impact both on interlocutors and on the Council's own understanding of situations it is addressing.

I have a more personal appreciation going further back, to 1999, when as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in what was then East Timor, I received five members of the Council on its first mission for five years in a United Nations compound under siege during post-ballot violence — a mission that played an important role in obtaining Indonesia's invitation for international assistance to restore security.

With five missions in both 2016 and 2017, the Council itself is clearly convinced of their value. That could surely be enhanced not just by the standard formulation of terms of reference and subsequent briefing, as described in note 507, but by more strategic prior discussion of the objectives around which the Council can unite and subsequent discussion of the follow-up.

There are many other aspects of working methods that I cannot take more time to discuss. Security Council Report made suggestions for greater synergy in the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in another of our recent reports, consistent with but going beyond the general importance of communication and interaction enshrined in note 507.

Perhaps this is a good way to end: by emphasizing that successive notes 507 have been valuable codifications of existing agreements regarding Council practice, but advances in that practice depend on the constant creativity and initiative of members of the Council. We have described in our most recent report how elected members and the wider membership have contributed to past developments, and I trust that this open debate will give impetus to further developments in the transparency and effectiveness of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Martin for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to all Member States that will be participating in today's open debate. I would also like to welcome the valuable briefing made by Mr. Ian Martin at the beginning of this meeting.

The development and improvement of the working methods of the Security Council are critical to shouldering its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security. Over the past 25 years, many improvements have been introduced in its working methods, especially after the end of the Cold War. They include communication between the Council and non-member States, as well as between the Council and other United Nations organs, such as the General Assembly; the flow of information from and to the Council; the marked increase in the number of formal and thematic and other meetings that involve the participation of non-governmental and civil society organizations; and the circulation of Council documents to non-member States before their adoption.

These improvements are critical and cannot be underestimated. Credit for them goes to the Security Council, especially its non-permanent members, and to a number of groups of States that launched many initiatives as part of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Although these improvements are important to ensuring the transparency of the Council, they remain insufficient. There is still room for more improvements that would enhance the Council's role in carrying out its tasks and responsibilities as stated in the Charter of the United Nations.

The participation of Member States in the decision-making process within the Council remains

weak as a result of its working methods and the lack of transparency under the pretext of ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and quick decision-making. However, we believe that it is important to engage all Member States, especially States particularly affected, and to consult with them within an agreed framework before making any decisions, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

While we stress the importance of implementing Article 25 of the Charter with regard to Member States' implementation of the Council's resolutions, the Council must also comply with other Articles to ensure the transparency and credibility of its decisions, especially when it comes to issues related directly to the security and stability of Member States, such as imposing sanctions and establishing peacekeeping operations.

We are aware that the General Assembly, as part of the intergovernmental negotiations, is currently discussing comprehensive reform of the Security Council within the five issues set out in its decision 62/557, including improving the working methods of the Council. However, we reaffirm the need to address another critical issue, namely, the veto. Many challenges remain in addressing that issue. The abuse of the veto by some of the five permanent members on many occasions has undermined the credibility of the decision-making process and has prevented the Council in some cases from carrying out its responsibilities and from taking the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security. Some permanent Council members have used the right to the veto on some occasions during past years to protect their own national interests and the interests of their allies.

I would like to note that the State of Kuwait is among the signatories of the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, whereby members of the Council pledge not to vote against any draft resolution intended to prevent crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes, especially in the Security Council. We also welcome the French-Mexican initiative, which calls for voluntarily refraining from using the right to the veto in cases of crimes against humanity. We hope that we will be able to reach an agreement to restrain the use of the veto on humanitarian issues, including the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in need, medical evacuation and the imposition of a humanitarian truce.

The State of Kuwait, as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, attaches great importance to the role of Member States in improving the Council's working methods. We have chosen to organize this open debate — the first on this topic since July 2016 (see S/PV.7740) — to allow all Member States to express their views on the working methods and to make concrete proposals for their improvement. We look forward to hearing their opinions on improving the working methods of the Council and to building on the lauded efforts of our predecessors.

We cannot address progress in improving the working methods of the Council without referring to the noteworthy efforts made by the previous Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, especially Japan, which played a pivotal role as Chair of the Informal Working Group in the adoption of the revised note S/2017/507 in August 2017. The note has become a useful reference for all, especially the newly elected members. In that regard, I would like to shed light on a number of substantial elements of note S/2017/507 that we consider very beneficial, especially as newly elected members.

First, under paragraph 140 of the revised note, the Security Council invites the newly elected members of the Council to observe all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and the informal consultations of the whole for a period of three months, from 1 October immediately preceding their term of membership. The Council also invites the Secretariat to provide all the relevant Council communications to the newly elected members during that period.

I would also like to bring up another important point pertaining to the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. The members of the Council are required to consult informally with the newly elected members on this issue. Such consultations should be informal, undertaken in a balanced, transparent, effective and comprehensive manner and concluded before the month of October. These practices have proven to be useful not only for the newly elected members, but for the Council as a whole, allowing it to work coherently and effectively from the beginning of the year.

The State of Kuwait has only just begun its membership on the Council. However, we have spared no effort to ensure the transparency and inclusivity

of our work. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kuwait organized the first meeting, on 26 January, in an open format, allowing all States concerned to attend so as to increase transparency and inclusivity.

I also welcome the convening of informal briefings, which has become a common practice over the past several years. Accordingly, Kuwait intends to convene a wrap-up session at the end of this month to highlight the main landmarks of our presidency, and I look forward to the participation of all Member States, both from the Council and the general membership.

While the revised text of note 507 is comprehensive and balanced, we stress the need for the Council to review progress periodically and ensure its full and effective implementation. In that regard, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions intends to assess all gaps in the implementation of the note to ensure the full implementation of the practices recommended therein, and to consider proposals made by Member States today in an attempt to ensure transparency, inclusivity and interactive exchanges in the work of the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I thank Mr. Martin for his important briefing, which I believe will give us a great road map for our work in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

It is easy to get bogged down in the details of working methods. Those details are important, without a doubt. We want the Security Council to operate as effectively and efficiently as it can, but we, the United States, want to focus on just one aspect of our working methods today, that is, we want to talk about people.

We need to commit ourselves to listen carefully to the people around the world who are affected by our decisions and to keep the impact of conflicts on them foremost in our minds. If we could truly channel the perspectives of the people living in places like South Sudan, Syria or the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have been traumatized by years of conflict, think of how our responses would change. But all too often that is not how our meetings work. Instead of thinking about actual conditions on the ground, we default to talking in generalities that can dull the senses. We talk in statistics that can never fully capture the suffering that happens outside this Chamber.

That is why the information that the Council receives from on-the-ground monitoring is essential for conflict prevention, and we must be inclusive and allow for a full range of voices to explain the dynamics of conflicts and the totality of their impact on civilians, communities and societies. It is for those reasons that we have so frequently sought to have civil society, human rights defenders and humanitarian experts brief the Council.

The voices from the field are important for two main reasons. First, the information that we receive from humanitarian workers and human rights defenders differs from other types of reports. In part, that is because without their perspective our knowledge of a conflict is incomplete. When civil society briefers join us, we hear about cases of torture, arbitrary arrests and crackdowns on peaceful protests. Those are human rights issues that can deeply affect our understanding of a conflict. In fact, such human rights violations may be the source of a conflict, and pursuing accountability can be key to a durable peace.

We therefore need to hear perspectives not just from the Government elites, but from the people who are documenting credible cases of human suffering. Closing our eyes and ears to those voices does not advance our interest in maintaining international peace and security. Rather, it leads to discussions that are detached from realities on the ground and impedes our ability to fully deliver on our responsibilities on the Security Council.

We need to be especially mindful of the importance of hearing perspectives from women and girls in conflict. Their voices are easy to overlook in official reports, but a fundamental part of the Council's modern agenda is recognizing the need to include women and girls at every stage of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We know that peace agreements are more durable when women are at the table. By the same token, we strengthen our own mandates when we take gender perspective into account. The best way to do that is simple: inviting women from conflict areas to share their views with us directly.

Secondly, human rights reporting and monitoring give the Council improved situational analysis and early-warning capabilities. Both are needed if we are going to improve the Council's track record in preventing conflict. The Council has already acknowledged, in paragraph 13 of resolution 2171 (2014), that "serious abuses and violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, including sexual and gender-based violence, can be an early indication of a descent into conflict or escalation of conflict". But that is also just common sense. It is hard to imagine any conflict on our agenda that did not begin with widespread human rights abuses — often directed against women and girls. The sooner we know that such situations are emerging, the faster we can react.

However, the Council's standard practice and working methods do not fully capture that link. Once conflict emerges, the Council immerses itself in the details of political and peacekeeping missions, often spending large amounts of time and resources in the process. But if we acted decisively after receiving warning signs of human rights violations, we could stand a better chance of preventing conflict in the first place.

That is where we must aim to improve, and we certainly can improve. For example, we could establish an annual open debate for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in mediation and conflict analysis to ensure that the Council is aware of best practices. We could invite relevant NGOs to engage with the Council ahead of mandate renewals or the adoption of thematic resolutions, similar to our practice of engaging with troop-contributing countries in advance of mandate renewals. We could more frequently invite humanitarian and human rights organizations to speak under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, making them participants in meetings. We could also ask them to provide more input into briefings and reports. We can also make better use of our video teleconferencing capabilities to hear directly from the people affected by the situations on our agenda.

We hope that the Council can soon begin expanding on these ideas and seeking ways to increase our engagement with key humanitarian, human rights and civil society partners. Those are the voices that should inspire all of us on the Council to act in defence of those most vulnerable.

That alone will not overcome our deepest political divisions, of course, but when we are confronted with the voices of ordinary people demanding an end to conflict, our responses can change for the better. That will never change, but we should structure the Council in a way that maximizes the chances to see that our common interest lies in preventing the outbreak of war and addressing pressing threats. Hearing directly from people is a powerful way to achieve that goal.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by welcoming our new colleague, Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China. Unfortunately, he is not here. Needless to say, our greetings will be conveyed to him and we want to congratulate him on his new appointment and wish him every success in his work.

We would like to commend Mr. Martin for his very interesting and in many ways very accurate briefing, and to thank the delegation of Kuwait for organizing today's meeting.

For many years now the Security Council been discussing the question of its working methods in an open format with the broad participation of States Members of the United Nations. Taking a periodic inventory of our working-methods arsenal helps us to identify the various areas where there is room for the improvement of the Council's working practices. We would like to highlight last year's update of the note by the President of the Security Council contained in the annex to document S/2017/507, produced under the leadership of the Japanese delegation, which chaired the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. It is an important compendium of the working practices of the Security Council and extremely helpful for both the permanent and non-permanent members. It is significant that today's meeting is being presided over by the delegation that now chairs the Informal Working Group. We are sure that today's meeting will help to enrich this body's activity with new ideas. Needless to say, that is on the understanding that any steps to improve working methods must be taken only by the Security Council itself, in accordance with Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The issue of the Council's working methods is a very sensitive one. The purpose of making changes to them should be to increase the Security Council's

effectiveness and efficiency in implementing its task of maintaining international peace and security. Embracing populism, including in the context of the never-ending efforts to increase the level of transparency in the Council's work, is not always helpful. Transparency is important for ensuring that United Nations Members and the world community are broadly familiar with the Council's work, but it should not become an obstacle to frank and substantive discussions among Council members. We have serious reservations about the practice of considering thematic subjects in the Council, especially those that come under the remit of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or other United Nations bodies, in accordance with the Charter. It violates the established division of labour and distracts the Security Council from its priority tasks, on which it can and should take concrete decisions. We support expanding the Council's coordination with a wide range of Member States and with those that can provide it with information vital to decision-making. For that the Council has various appropriate mechanisms in its arsenal, including informal Arria Formula meetings and interactive dialogues. However, we will not tolerate turning such meetings into propaganda performances, and we urge that they be used specifically to raise members' awareness on issues on the Council's agenda.

We welcome the fact that the Kuwait presidency has asked Member States for suggestions for further modernizing and democratizing the Council's work. In our view, we should take a closer look at the distribution of responsibilities for the informal oversight of the Council's various dossiers. Being a penholder is an additional responsibility, and those carrying out that function have to act impartially and respectfully, keeping a constant finger on the pulse of the events in the countries concerned. Inactivity on the part of some penholders has often resulted in the serious deterioration of situations and the emergence of so-called forgotten crises. We should expand the circle of penholders and do so particularly by using non-permanent members. We would like to tackle this issue seriously within the relevant working group.

The methodology for negotiating Security Council resolutions needs improvement. Recent situations that have arisen when work has been done in a high-pressure atmosphere of artificial deadlines, precluding thorough study of the relevant documents, are unacceptable. What we end up with is half-baked documents that do not take into account the concerns of all Council members, who should be participants in the negotiation of draft decisions and resolutions at every stage of the work. Another issue of concern that the Working Group should address is attempts to arbitrarily interpret the formats for considering regional situations. In that regard we should be guided not by national preferences — often phobias, actually — but by the real state of affairs in hotspots.

As we have already noted, we should be working constantly to improve the Council's working methods. However, those efforts can be genuinely effective only when Council members reject politicized approaches and choose concerted efforts on a basis of mutual respect for each other's concerns and priorities. I would also like to mention, since the subject has come up, that the right to the veto does not come under the category of the Council's working methods. It is rather a cornerstone of the entire architecture of the Security Council, not a privilege but an instrument pledging and guaranteeing the Council's ability to reach balanced decisions, which are the only decisions that have a high likelihood of being fulfilled as effectively as possible.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate, which shows how important you consider the issue of improving the Security Council's working methods, both in your position as President of the Council for this month and as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I would also like to thank Ian Martin warmly for his briefing and for his recent report on the subject in Security Council Report.

The first point I would like to emphasize is that what is at stake behind our reflections on the Security Council's working methods is the effectiveness of the United Nations organ that has primary responsibility for issues of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. Because it is focused on the crises that are currently disturbing the international order, more than any other institution the Security Council must be able to adapt its methods and functioning to changes in its environment. In order to do that, when necessary it must be able to reflect on its own work and examine it critically. The Council's work rests on a foundation based, needless to say, on the Charter, particularly Chapter V. Apart from that juridical basis, the Council's rules are listed in its provisional rules of procedure. This edifice is

crowned by a set of rules and best practices outlined in the famous note by the President of the Security Council currently contained in the annex to document S/2017/507 — note 507.

The second point I want to emphasize is that one of the Council's strengths is the flexibility of its rules. The difficult part of the work of the Informal Working Group lies precisely in its ability to codify those rules and good practices without depriving them of that flexibility. The latest version of note 507 — and I would like to pay tribute to Japan, the previous Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions — records a series of important and useful steps.

With regard to its form, the note has been simplified and reorganized to be a clearer guide to the daily work of the Council. France used it quite often during its presidency in October. With regard to substance, the note includes several new elements that reflect existing practices or goals set by the Council. I will mention a few points that my delegation considers to be vital.

First, there are details on preparing newly elected members and future members for the Council. Second are the good practices in the area of consultations, including more regular use of different items in accordance with the development of events, an effort to make discussions more interactive, and enhanced transparency through more frequent press statements. Thirdly, there are recommendations aiming to make briefings more operational and ensure that they meet the expectations of the Council. Fourthly, the note sets out specific guidelines on how texts will be discussed before they are adopted by the Council, in particular with regard to the role of penholders. Fifthly, there are factors to improve the preparation, content and follow-up of Security Council missions. Sixth are indications reflecting the goal of strengthening the joint work with regional organizations, in particular the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Following such comprehensive work, our responsibility — in the first place, that of the Informal Working Group — is to work to fully implement the recommendations set by the Council. Much remains to be done to benefit fully from existing guidelines before starting new endeavours. Among the areas for improvement, a few recurring factors should be recalled.

During consultations, our discussions must be more direct, more interactive and more informal in order to foster a genuine exchange of views. At public meetings, in particular open debates, we must do better to enforce time limits on interventions and ensure that they are operational in nature. Generally, we should ensure that the Council continues its efforts to adapt the format of its meetings to the subjects addressed. For example, in certain cases we could avoid instances of redundancy when public briefings are followed by closed consultations. We should also continue to benefit from informal meetings, in particular Arria Formula meetings, and informal interactive dialogue. France believes that it is essential to ensure systematic respect for multilingualism for all Council documents and meetings, including those of its subsidiary bodies.

In parallel to the areas for improvement I have just mentioned, the Council should continue efforts to improve the transparency of its work — with regard to troop-contributing countries, in the framework of discussions pertaining to peacekeeping, but also with regard to the States Members of the United Nations in general, including through public meetings and, like today, through open debates.

Beyond the issue of transparency in the Council's work — and even more important — is the matter of its representativity, and that brings me back to its basis: the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council should better reflects the realiies of our world, while strengthening its capacity and its legitimacy to assume its responsibilities with regard to international peace and security. Beyond the gradual but marginal improvements I have described, reform of the Security Council is required.

France's position is well known. We want the Council take into account the emergence of Powers that have not only the ability but also the will to shoulder their international responsibilities. France therefore supports the candidacies of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council, as well as a stronger presence of African countries among permanent and elected members.

It is in the same spirit that France has proposed that the five permanent members of the Security Council voluntarily and collectively suspend the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. The measure is voluntary and would not require a revision of the Charter, but rather a political commitment. It is about ensuring that the Council continues to fulfil its responsibilities in the area of international peace and security, and does not

lose its legitimacy as it faces the deadliest conflicts and the most serious actions.

In the light of the multiplication of crises and threats, the role of the Security Council is to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter. More than ever, France is determined make its contribution.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes today's meeting on the working methods of the Security Council and the implementation of note by the President S/2017/507. We also welcome Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of Security Council Report, and thank him for his interesting briefing.

We express our commitment to improving the work of the Council in this important area, which we believe should continue to be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and the corresponding provisional rules of procedure. We also believe that it is important to gradually develop and compile working practices on the basis of the principles of coherency, transparency, accountability, inclusion, efficiency and predictability, among others.

Peru thanks the members of the Council for unanimously adopting the latest note 507, in August 2017, under the leadership of the delegation of Japan and Ambassador Koro Bessho. We underscore the rigorous approach taken to consider the recommendations and contributions made by all of the Members of the Organization. Those contributions include those made by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, of which Peru is a member and whose statement we endorse. We would like to reiterate our commitment to implementing its code of conduct, in particular with regard to limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

We would also like to underscore that it is important that the Council's working methods ensure timely cooperation with the Secretariat in addressing risks and emerging threats to international peace and security. We believe that is vital in preventing the occurrence, escalation and continuation of conflict.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight a number of good practices and identify areas where we believe it is important to continue to make progress.

First, for us it has been particularly useful to observe, three months before taking up our membership, the consultations of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and to receive the corresponding documents. We believe that it is important to build on that practice and extend it to the observation of the process of negotiations on resolutions and presidential statements. We would like to thank the members of the Council for their support during the preparation process. We also thank the Secretariat and civil society organizations.

Secondly, we acknowledge that note 507 recognizes that all members of the Council can propose and draft documents for adoption. We are encouraged by the posibility of establishing co-penholderships, and we stand ready to contribute to those responsibilities. We welcome the fact that during the first month of our membership on the Council there has been at least one consultations meeting on documents that have been adopted. We believe it is important to complement the work of the penholders with the views of the Chairs of various subsidiary bodies, as appropriate. The reports of panels of experts and the field visits provide substantive, first-hand information that is vital when drafting resolutions or statements.

Thirdly, for the sake of transparency, Peru believes it is important for delegations to publicly share their positions in the Council's informative meetings. We support the excellent practice started by Uruguay and believe it should be extended to the subsidiary bodies of the Council, as appropriate. At the same time, we recognize the usefulness of closed consultations to complement open debates and favour greater interaction among the Council members and with the Secretariat. We believe that it would be useful if, at the end of meetings, the presidency could always provide for the press a summary of the main points discussed, particularly when formal documents have not been adopted.

In the same vein, we consider positive the meetings held at the beginning of the month to present the Council's monthly programme of work to all Members of the Organization. The same is true of the wrap-up sessions at the end of the monthly programme. Furthermore, we believe that, when proposing consideration of an urgent item or under other business, the interested delegations should provide information on the specific issues they propose for discussion.

Finally, my delegation believes that the implementation of sanctions must fully respect due process. In that regard, it is urgent to appoint the Ombudsperson of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), concerning Al-Qaida and the

Taliban and associated individuals and entities. It would be advisable to assess the appropriateness of extending such an individual to other sanctions committees.

I would like to reiterate to the Kuwaiti delegation our support for the success of its work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Peru will resolutely support all initiatives to improve the working methods of the Council.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan commends the Kuwaiti presidency for convening this very timely and critical open debate, and looks forward to greater awareness and actions with regard to its results. We personally thank Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, in his capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for his dedication and determination to streamline and to reform the working methods of the Security Council. We also thank Ian Martin for his substantive briefing. We support its content and analysis.

It is timely to review the implementation of the revised presidential note S/2017/507 to increase the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the Council. Kazakhstan was among the first elected members to welcome and to test the implementation of the provisions on transitional arrangements for the new non-permanent members in response to the call of the broader United Nations membership to uphold the principles of transparency and inclusiveness in the Security Council reforms, including its subsidiary bodies, which are crucial to the Council's responsibility. We believe that the proposals resulting from today's deliberations should be reviewed in the Working Group so as to update the note in the subsequent months.

While elected members serve for only a two-year term, they have an important role to play and can take responsibility for the way in which the Council operates without remonstrating about the veto power. The elected 10 must raise their influence and legitimacy as representatives elected by the General Assembly as a universal platform and use their varied composition to ensure reforms. It is not always the case today that the elected 10 face constrained capabilities in making substantive proposals on Security Council documents and in building consensus. That undermines the efficiency of the Council.

During Kazakhstan's presidency, we strove for more openness, inclusiveness and accountability and held as many as 21 public meetings. We ensured the adoption of press elements following almost every consultation in January. In that regard, today we highlight the importance of innovations in the drafting process, as well as of streamlining the format of meetings, inter alia, consultations among Council members, penholdership and interaction with the wider United Nations membership and other stakeholders.

We note that paragraph 81 of the new note 507 specifies that penholders or co-penholders exchange information and engage in timely consultations with all Council members with openness and flexibility. For each draft resolution that is not a technical rollover or for each presidential statement, the penholder or co-penholders need to present and to discuss the draft resolution with members in at least one round of informal consultations or informal meetings. Limited time frames for consultations on proposed resolutions do not contribute to the substance, the quality or the general effectiveness of the Security Council.

My country believes that one of the Council's core capabilities to prevent conflict is closely related to its working methods. While we recognize that systematizing existing and new Council practices is desirable, just documenting them may not result in better performance. Indeed, many of the tasks that the Council undertakes do not necessarily require new rules and agreements but, more important, unity, compromise, trust and confidence-building — and therefore a change in the Council's culture and practices. In fact, more opportunities are needed for engaging in the drafting process. In general, penholdership is still not as wide a process as expected and desired by many and a greater role for the group of elected members is required. We therefore fully support the provisions in the new note 507 on co-penholdership for both permanent and elected members of the Council.

Since joining the Council last year, Kazakhstan has been pleased to witness and to be part of the positive trends towards better coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Indeed, that synergy successfully produced early elections for non-permanent members in June 2016 and June 2017. That was a significant and important break from the previous practice, as time is indeed a precious commodity in order to prepare for a seat on the Council. It helped to address not only some administrative concerns but also key substantive issues, inter alia, bridging the skill gaps. We acknowledge that that also

became possible because of the courses so generously provided by many stakeholders, including Finland, China, France, the United Kingdom and other Member States, as well as the Security Council Affairs Division, academia and non-governmental organizations.

We are also pleased to acknowledge a more transparent process for appointing new Chairs of Council subsidiary bodies, with the full involvement of the current and newly elected non-permanent members and the wider United Nations membership, demonstrating transparency and inclusivity to all to create a new culture. Moreover, we hope that the joint consultations of subsidiary bodies will continue as a regular practice of the Council.

In that spirit, we held many more open briefings and debates, with efficient interactions among members and updates from senior officials, rather than informal closed consultations, thereby fulfilling our obligations and commitments before the wider General Assembly membership.

Finally, Kazakhstan remains committed to enhancing and improving the functioning of the Council as part of a larger institutional and structural United Nations reform process.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation to the Kuwaiti presidency for having convened today's timely and important debate and for the excellent briefing by Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of Security Council Report. Let me also pay tribute to all those who have contributed to date to the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council.

In particular, I would like to express our gratitude for the excellent work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in recent years under the dedicated chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Koro Bessho. The adoption of consecutive presidential notes, including the most recent comprehensive note S/2017/507, marks an important step in the steady development of the Council's working methods. Several of the recently adopted provisions are of particular importance to the elected members. We especially welcome the provisions that adjust the working methods for the early election of non-permanent members, providing the latter with more time to observe the work of the Council and enabling a smoother transition of the chairmanships of its subsidiary organs.

Allow me also to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the role of Chair of the Informal Working Group and to wish you the greatest success in that capacity. I would like to assure you of our future dedication to the group's work. We are ready to cooperate and support efforts to implement the provisions of the most recent note 507 and to further improve the Council's working methods. We look forward to the meetings of the group.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your intervention, in particular the elements concerning the way forward. Poland would greatly welcome the full implementation by the Council of the provisions of note 507. We are committed to working to that end. In the spirit of solidarity, we would propose considering in addition a few ideas to further increase the transparency, inclusiveness, effectiveness and innovation of the working methods.

First, we would welcome developments in response to the need for a strategic overview and a prevention-oriented approach within the Council so that matters that may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security could be identified early and addressed appropriately. We see the need to fully utilize the potential of the Secretariat in that respect, including the Department of Political Affairs. Briefings on situations that may escalate would help the Council discharge its primary responsibility effectively.

Secondly, I would like to underline the role that the elected members of the Security Council play in making the Council more transparent and effective. They can bring fresh perspectives and ideas to be developed. In that context, I would like to mention the most recent initiative of the elected members, on a way of enhancing the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the Military Staff Committee.

Thirdly, since one of the areas that Poland intends to focus on during its time on the Security Council is strengthening respect for international law within the context of international peace and security, we believe it would be worthwhile to exchange views on ways to ensure that the Council's outcomes are connected to applicable international law. In our opinion, it could help to make sure that its decisions are broadly considered and that Member States are willing to cooperate in their implementation.

Fourthly, I would also like to underline the importance of hearing briefers from civil society,

including representatives of women's organizations, in Council meetings. We believe that they can contribute useful added value to our discussions.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank Kuwait for convening today's meeting and reiterate Poland's commitment to improving the working methods of the Council.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We would like to express our appreciation to the Kuwaiti presidency for organizing today's open debate on the working methods of the Council. We thank Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing on the progress that has been made in improving those working methods, and we commend Security Council Report for the research paper it published last month, providing useful background information. I should also thank you, Mr. President, for inviting Ian to brief us for this debate, since he is the best person one could think of for the purpose. We would be remiss if we failed to recognize the excellent work done by Japan and Ambassador Koro Bessho, as the former Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, in reviewing and adopting the new note of the President (S/2017/507, annex), agreed on in August last year. The note has introduced a number of improvements into the working methods of the Council, which we hope will enhance its inclusiveness, efficiency and transparency.

The world is changing fast. There are new and emerging challenges to international peace and security that require the Council to be better organized, not only to keep pace with the changing times but also to be responsive and effective in carrying out its responsibilities. There is no question that the past year has enabled us to better understand how things work in the Council and what might be improved or further consolidated as a way to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of those issues, which Mr. Martin also raised in his briefing. I will address six items related to the programme of work.

It is self-evident that the programme of work is composed of items based on the reporting cycle and the priorities of each presidency. It includes several items that we continue to discuss although there are no new developments in them to speak of. I believe that we therefore need to consider what we can do to streamline our work and prioritize issues that require the Council's urgent attention and response. We feel that is something we should look at seriously. In terms of the discussion of thematic issues proposed by Council presidencies, we see a growing tendency to bring up issues that are not necessarily within the Council's purview. While we certainly cannot overlook the nexus between peace, security and development, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that the Security Council operates in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in full respect for the various mandates of other United Nations bodies, based on the principle of complementarity and subsidiarity. That has become a bone of contention among Council members and should be addressed.

Secondly, with regard to Council meetings, we appreciate the efforts being made to enhance transparency by holding more and more meetings in the open Chamber. At the same time, putting a divided Council on display may not necessarily be helpful with some of the most important and sensitive issues. What is even more critical in that regard is that members would be unlikely to be more willing to raise issues that are sensitive but useful in open meetings rather than in consultations. Without totally discounting the value of open briefings and debates, the value of holding closed consultations in order to have frank exchanges of views cannot be ignored. It is therefore important to strike the right balance between enhancing transparency on the one hand and holding candid behind-the-scenes interactions on the other. That is also something that we will continue to grapple with, and I hope the Informal Working Group will reflect on it and try to come up with useful recommendations.

Thirdly, I would like to turn my attention to reports and other communications with the Secretariat. The Secretary-General's reports are very useful, especially for elected members, who may not have other means of gathering adequate information. The challenge is how to ensure that those reports are more concise, timely, relevant and to the point, in order to help members achieve a better understanding of issues and make meaningful contributions in discussions. We believe that there is room for improvement in that regard. Briefings by Special Representatives should also be concise and to the point, highlighting the latest developments and drawing attention to issues that may require a response or action on the part of the Council.

The practice of bringing in briefers from other regional organizations, such as the African Union and its regional mechanisms, is particularly important

in ensuring a regional perspective. We think this practice should be institutionalized. In the future, perhaps, instead of listening to United Nations Special Representatives and African Union speakers on the same issues, they could be asked to speak on different issues based on their respective advantages on the ground, so as to make their contributions more relevant to the Council's work of the Council and use the time more efficiently.

Another issue in this area is about communications from the Secretary-General on the appointment of Special Representatives and others. It is unfortunate that elected members often first hear about such appointments from the media. This concern has been raised before, but while some small steps may have been taken to address it, we hope it will now be dealt with more seriously and rectified more effectively.

My fourth point is about outcome documents. We all know that the issue of penholdership has under discussion for quite some time. The idea of co-penholdership should be seriously explored, since it would not only enable elected members to contribute to shaping the Council's outcome documents in areas where they have intimate knowledge and expertise, but also help to improve unity and consensus among members of the Council. Of course, the importance of allowing adequate time for consultations on Council resolutions and decisions has been an issue, and penholders have a special responsibility in that regard. Mr. Martin explained that point very eloquently, and we could not agree with him more.

Fifthly, consultations with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries (PCCs) before the renewal of mandates have not really been very productive or effective. Efforts have been made by members of the Council to facilitate informal interaction with TCCs, which we have found to be much more productive and effective. This needs to be encouraged. But the issue of how formal consultations can be improved should be looked at seriously if these are to be more relevant to the work of the Council and allow TCCs to make meaningful inputs into the mandate-renewal process. For example, the sharing of advance copies of the reports of TCCs and PCCS prior to informal and formal meetings could be envisaged.

Sixthly, and last but not least, I turn to the issue of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council annual consultations. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, we have the responsibility of facilitating the joint annual meeting of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. In this connection, the acknowledgement in the revised note 507 of the importance of the annual joint consultative meeting and informal dialogue between the Security Council and members of the African Union Peace and Security Council is very welcome. However, we believe that there is a need for improvement in terms of agenda-setting and format in the conduct of the joint consultations to ensure that frank and meaningful exchanges of views can take place on matters relating to peace and security in Africa.

The outcome of the joint consultations is usually negotiated, but it does not seem to have any relevance in terms of future reference once it has been adopted. In fact, the outcome of the last joint consultation has so far not been adopted. There is a need, therefore, to reflect on this and see if it is possible to be innovative in this regard. Of course, the other party, that is, the African side, also has a responsibility to contribute to making the annual event more effective and productive.

In a nutshell, these are some of the issues that we would like to flag based on our experience in the Council over the past year, and we hope that the group will consider them seriously and come up with useful recommendations to further improve the working methods of the Council.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Ian Martin for his briefing and the Kuwaiti presidency for having scheduled this open debate. I should like also to congratulate Kuwait on taking up the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I look forward to a productive two years under its leadership.

I am afraid, Sir, that you have a tough act to follow, and I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Japan as the outgoing Chair, particularly for its stewardship of the negotiations that led to agreement on a new note 507.

The new note 507 is a valuable resource for all current and future members of the Council. It brings together almost all of the Council's myriad procedural documents and contains a number of important changes. In particular, I would highlight the new language on the conduct of informal consultations, the negotiation

process and cooperation with non-Council bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union, and I echo what the representative of Ethiopia said on the value of African Union briefers to the Council, something we called for collectively when we were in Addis Ababa for our annual meeting.

Many parts of the note reflect best practice, which is built up gradually over the years, but it also signals our collective ambition for a more inclusive, transparent and effective Council that is better able to tackle the challenges of the modern world. One of the ways in which we can deliver this ambition is through a stronger relationship with external partners. Last week the Cruz report reminded us of the risks face by peacekeepers deployed by the Council.

The United Kingdom is pleased to have worked with Pakistan to strengthen triangular cooperation between the Council, troop- contributing countries, police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, and looks forward to further discussions on this crucial issue in the forthcoming session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping.

The Security Council needs to work closely with those countries whose troops and police are on the front line when we consider our peacekeeping deployments, and we in the United Kingdom will continue to ensure that we do so when considering mandates.

We also need to hear more from civil society and in particular from women. I would just note that today marks 100 years since women first gained the right to vote in the United Kingdom. All too often we hear only one perspective and do not hear from those most affected by our decisions in this Chamber. Last year just 30 representatives of civil society briefed the Council, and under a quarter of our briefers were women. We need to do better.

We also need to continue our efforts to make our meetings more effective and action-oriented. This means making sure that the briefings we receive from the Secretariat are comprehensive by promoting more interactivity in consultations and seeking outcomes from our meetings. This will not be accomplished by more change to the guidance but requires the commitment of all of us around this table, especially during Council members' presidencies.

Finally, the Council needs to work harder to meet the Secretary-General's ambition and our own to do more on preventative diplomacy. This means focusing our time on the conflicts of today and tomorrow, not only those of previous decades. It means being flexible in how we handle our agenda and making the best use of the Secretariat's insights, including through situational awareness briefings.

As the world's threats evolve, so, too, must the Council. We must implement note 507. We must also challenge ourselves to continue to adapt as a Council so that we better meet our mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

May I just finish by thanking those who work so hard to support us as a Council, including in particular the Security Council Affairs Division and our excellent interpreters.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the holding of this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council under your presidency, Sir. We also welcome the very instructive briefing by Mr. Ian Martin on this topic. My delegation is convinced that our exchanges will make it possible to take an additional step forward towards improving the working methods of the Security Council in order to achieve greater transparency and effectiveness in its work.

Côte d'Ivoire congratulates the members of the Council and all other individuals and organizations on the quality of their respective contributions, which they have been making for some years now, to improving the working methods of the Security Council. It commends and expresses its appreciation to Japan in particular, whose continuing commitment to this process has led it to head the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions on several occasions.

My delegation's statement will focus on three points that we deem vital to achieving the major progress required to increase the effectiveness of the Council's work.

First, concerning the participation of new non-permanent members in the work of the Security Council before their term has begun, my delegation welcomes the option given to newly elected members to participate, for a three-month period prior to the beginning of their mandate, in all Council meetings, including its plenary consultations and those of its subsidiary bodies. This decision is to be welcomed

as it allows new arrivals to understand the dynamics involved as well as the Council's practices, procedures and working methods, so that they can hit the ground running from the time they begin their term.

Secondly, my country welcomes the dialogue among troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat, with a view to enabling their points of view and concerns to be taken into account. Such consultations also make it possible better to prepare peacekeeping operations.

Thirdly, Security Council field missions to conflict areas allow the Council to better grasp the real problems being experienced in the countries visited and to come into contact with all concerned stakeholders and promote dialogue between them in order to help them emerge from crisis. Such missions are also a direct way of gathering information, making it possible for the Council not only to assess whether progress has been made, in order to better craft its decisions, but also to bring pressure to bear on the parties to a conflict in order to induce them to better fulfil their commitments, for example in the framework of a peace agreement.

Nonetheless, my delegation would like to commend the Council for the quality of its relations with the press via presidential statements and press statements, which help to disseminate information about the work of the Council among the general public.

My delegation also encourages the operationalization of joint missions of the Security Council and of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to areas of conflict in Africa.

Let me say by way of conclusion that my delegation wishes every success to the delegation of Kuwait in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and it reiterates its full readiness to contribute to the work of the Group. My delegation also thanks the Secretariat for its dedication and urges it to ensure that all reports and other required working documents are made available as soon as possible and in all working languages of the Organization in order to enable their consideration by the various delegations.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea): Mr. President, I would like to begin by expressing to you the gratitude of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for having convened this important open debate on the methods of work of the Security Council less than a week after having assumed the presidency of the Council. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Mr. Ian Martin, for the praiseworthy and lofty work he is doing at the head of the important body he heads and for having come here to brief us on this key issue.

We would also echo previous speakers in warmly congratulating Japan for the role it played in the context of adopting Note 507 on the question of the working methods of the Security Council.

Since 2011 the Security Council has regularly held an open debate, a practice that has now become customary, on the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council: working methods of the Security Council". This practice has been revitalized annually since it was initiated in December 1994 by France, which organized for the first time a debate on the Council's working methods.

Today this practice has evolved in the light of the two contradictory demands that are made of the Security Council. The Council is expected to, on the one hand, adopt decisions that ensure rapid and effective action to maintain international peace and security, and, on the other hand, to obtain the support of a large majority of the membership of the United Nations so that its decisions can be fully implemented.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea would stress that Note 507 makes no mention of issues pertaining to sanctions committees, which continue to be governed by the working methods as adopted by individual sanctions committees and the notes and statements by the President of the Security Council listed in the note by the President of the Security Council of 7 February 2006 (S/2006/78).

With respect to issues that are not mentioned in this note, working methods pertaining to interaction with troop- and police-contributing countries continue to be governed by resolution 1353 (2001) and by the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/26), as well as other relevant documents of the Security Council.

Furthermore, we welcome the continuing progress made by the Security Council since 2006, when Note 507 of the President of the Council was adopted for the first time as a compilation of the Council's methods of work that clearly sets out its best practices, without limiting the flexibility necessary to carry out

the Council's work. In 2010, the Council adopted the revised Note 507, aimed at enhancing its work.

We believe, therefore, that this debate is a clear sign of the genuine interest of all States Members of the United Nations in enhancing the transparency, inclusiveness and openness of the work of the Security Council, in order to ensure that the Council truly acts on behalf of all Member States, in conformity with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. Equatorial Guinea is a member of the group of States that support not only a code of conduct pertaining to the methods of the Security Council, in response to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, but also the French-Mexican initiative on the suspension of the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities.

At the same time, we are convinced that the existence of the veto is an important obstacle to the work of the Council. The veto has on occasion prevented the Council from making clear to all nations of the world that there is no place for impunity.

Respect for the Charter of the United Nations is undermined by the fact that its Article 27, paragraph 3, continues to be disregarded. It is vital that clear procedures be established in order to ensure respect for this Article so that it can be fully implemented. From an impartial and objective perspective, it is clear that the Security Council should not have to confront insurmountable obstacles, especially internal ones, in organizing field missions. In that respect, we welcome the initial measures that were adopted in 2010 that were aimed at introducing certain official guidelines relating to the use of this important instrument of the Council.

Equatorial Guinea is in favour of continuing discussions within the Council to develop and enhance provisions regarding Security Council missions. We believe that the Council should clearly define the following important elements: mission planning and the decision-making process on deployment; mission composition; the timeline for the submission of reports and the way in which they are crafted; and the decision-making process of the Council on a mission's outcome.

The adoption by the Security Council of the revised Note 507 by consensus consolidated, simplified and restructured the original Note 507 of 2010 and all additional independent presidential notes that have been issued since then, including S/2016/619, which was mentioned earlier. In addition, as highlighted in the press release, the revised note 507 contains some new and important elements for improving the Council's effectiveness in areas such as the monthly programme of work. We believe that improving the Council's working methods did not end with the adoption of revised note 507. It is an open, dynamic and continuous process involving collective efforts. And while codifying best practices is a useful exercise, it is not an end in itself. The most important thing is the Security Council's implementation and actual practice.

A core component of the Council's responsibility revolves around the work of its subsidiary bodies, which are central to the implementation of its decisions. They carry out a wide range of tasks, ranging from monitoring implementation and evaluating compliance to coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. In that regard, we fully support efforts to make their work more streamlined and coordinated, since a better understanding of the work of the subsidiary bodies contributes to better and more effective implementation of the Council's decisions. In that regard, there are reasons to improve coordination among the subsidiary bodies, especially those that deal with related issues or have a similar geographical scope.

The note by the President contained in document S/2014/268, on drafting resolutions, refers to three elements — consultations with members, penholdership and consultations with other stakeholders. On the first element, consultations with Council members, the note states that penholders should consult with and ensure an exchange of information among all Council members. That frequently does not happen. The permanent members prepare the drafts, consult each other and finalize the process with very little time for discussion. When elected members wish to make comments or suggestions, the deadline has passed and there is no time to incorporate new suggestions, which means that non-permanent members have only two options — accepting a fait accompli and finding a reason to vote in favour; or abstaining or voting against, since sometimes they agree with the substance of the issue but not with the language used. This process should be much more inclusive in order to improve transparency in deliberations among all members of the Council.

Equatorial Guinea insists that the reforms of the working methods included in note 507, as well as of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, should be permanent, so that the Council can be held

accountable and have predictable and transparent standards. Equatorial Guinea endorses South Africa's suggestions on strategic cooperation, particularly between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, and so as to promote the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations.The Security Council has also adopted various documents, such as resolution 2033 (2012), which recognizes that the situation of regional organizations is conducive to understanding the nuances and complexity of conflicts and that their proximity enables them to have a direct influence on the prevention or resolution of conflicts in their regions.

Among other things, resolution 2033 (2012) outlined concrete steps to be taken by the Council to establish a more strategic relationship with the African Union, which would greatly strengthen regional competencies and local approaches to conflicts. In this regard, Equatorial Guinea pays a well-deserved tribute to Secretary-General António Guterres for his promotion of strengthened the relations between the United Nations and the African Union in general, and the African Union Commission in particular. This close cooperation is no longer limited to conflict resolution but now also includes sustainable development, as reflected in the memorandum recently signed between the United Nations and the African Union under the auspices of Mr. Guterres and Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Commission.

In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, Member States acknowledge that in carrying out its functions, the Security Council is acting on their behalf. The work of the Council is therefore the collective responsibility of all Member States, and its resolutions and presidential statements should reflect the views expressed by Member States, and in particular the States directly concerned or particularly affected.

The issue of the veto is intrinsically linked to the Council's working methods, particularly the decision-making mechanism. It is an anachronistic and anti-democratic privilege that should be re-evaluated with a view to evolving more inclusive and democratic decision-making measures. We believe that the much-needed reforms of the Council will allow for greater representativeness of the various regions and adjustments in working methods, including limiting or removing the veto privilege. The veto should no longer be an untouchable element. In this regard, we regret that the General Assembly has still not reached a conclusion on expanding the permanent membership — with all its privileges — and non-permanent memberships of the Security Council. We urge the facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiating process to draw on the documents produced at the sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first sessions of the General Assembly to produce a single document forming the basis for negotiations on Security Council reform, which should now be launched.

In conclusion, we welcome the initiative of electing non-permanent members of the Security Council six months earlier than before and allowing them to audit all Council meetings and have access to documents three months prior to joining the Council as actual members. Another innovation, introduced by Kazakhstan during its presidency in January, has been the ceremony in which the representatives of the newly elected members place their countries' flags in the Council Chamber. We congratulate Kazakhstan on this innovation, which should be instituted as a practice to be followed each January before the Council begins its work for the year.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the President for convening today's important debate. I would also like to thank Japan and the many preceding Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for their efforts. The work of the Working Group and the consolidated presidential note 507 are extremely helpful, both to those of us who are in the Council — particularly, perhaps, elected members — but also to those who follow our work from outside. I also want to thank *Security Council Report* and Ian Martin for their important work and briefing. I believe that the insightful and scrutinizing reporting that they do on a regular basis is a very useful way of pushing the Security Council to always try to deliver better results.

Working methods are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. Nonetheless, getting them right is essential to the work of the Council. They create the framework that enables each and every member of the Council to be fully involved, contribute to informed discussions and play a full and meaningful role in the Council's work. This is about every member having ownership of the issues on the agenda and meeting our respective responsibilities to our own peoples and to the wider membership. The working methods also seek to ensure that the conflicts on the Council's agenda, as well as emerging threats, are addressed with the right

timing, and that the formats and focuses of meetings are tailored to ensure the best chance of a meaningful outcome from the Council's deliberations. Getting this right requires leadership, with active members and an active Secretariat constantly questioning why and how we do things, for the sake of efficiency, transparency and, ultimately, accountability. My comments will focus on how the Council informs itself, on input to the Council and on how the Council takes action and becomes more effective — which is, of course, the output.

Several useful tools, introduced and supported, included by my own country, have now been codified in the note 507. Since joining the Council last year, we have called for a minimum outcome from all consultations in the form of agreed messages to the wider membership and the media. That is not only to increase transparency, but it also helps to bring a focus to the work of the Council. I am pleased to note that the practice now seems to have become more and more established. It is now also a general rule that there should be at least one round of negotiations with all Council members for each resolution or presidential statement. The logic behind that rule goes without saying. It is not just a question of courtesy. It is about getting real buy-in, and therefore ensuring the effectiveness of our actions.

Looking ahead, there is much more that can be done in order to further enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency. We need to have an honest conversation about the system of so-called penholders. If that system is to continue, such responsibility should be evenly distributed between both permanent, elected members and among members from different regions. We are all accountable for the maintenance of international peace and security, and note 507 stresses that any member may be a penholder. Similarly, there is no reason that both permanent and elected members should not serve as Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and have an equal say in the selection of those Chairs.

Briefings and interactions with representatives of civil society are now a mainstay of the Council's work. They must be continued and enhanced. Hearing the voices of those most affected by our decisions will broaden our understanding of the situations under discussion, and, by including women and youth, make us more effective.

For the sake of efficiency, we must continue to improve our interaction in informal consultations. Those meetings are not primarily a way for the Council to meet behind closed doors, but they provide an opportunity for Council members to engage informally, with the aim always of achieving concrete results. Briefings to the press and the wider membership after such meetings enhance transparency and push us all to try to come together in a way that is both responsible and meaningful.

The interaction with the broader membership has to be further improved and enhanced. The Council and its members need to talk with countries, and not only about them. I think the same is true for briefers coming to brief the Council, including from regions, such as the African Union and others. That point has been mentioned. We must think about how to make better use of the open debates as a means for a genuine dialogue between the Council and the broader membership. Should we allow for open debates where Security Council members do not speak at all, but just listen to the broader membership in preparation for subsequent decisions by the Council? In addition, the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission should become a closer and more strategic one.

As we have discussed previously, we have to actively operationalize the Council's preventive role, as foreseen in the sustaining peace resolutions, and I would also argue in the Charter of the United Nations. That includes the Secretary-General using mediation, good offices and his full powers under article 99 of the Charter, and the Council being very supportive towards him and responding to his calls. Better and more frequent use should be made of the situational awareness briefings. We hope that, with the reformed Secretariat, the input from the Secretary-General can be more holistic as regards peace and security. Note 507 further points out the preventive role of Security Council missions, which should be further explored, including through the use of mini-missions by a smaller number of Council members. I think this morning Ian Martin raised one very concrete example of a successful such mission from the late 1990s.

As a final point, and as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, I would like to touch briefly on the use of the veto. As a collective security body, we have a duty under the Charter of the United Nations to shoulder our primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The veto is not a right, but a responsibility. The use, or rather misuse, of the veto

to protect narrow national interests against the will of the broad majority of the membership diminishes the Council's efficiency and credibility. It is only when the Council comes together and works as a whole that we are able to do our job.

In conclusion, improving the working methods of the Security Council serves the purpose of creating an environment that allows the Council to take meaningful action in an effective, efficient, results-oriented and accountable way. We will continue to work to ensure that elected and non-elected members have equal means to shoulder their responsibility under the Charter. In that vein, the elected members recently requested that their representatives be invited to participate in the missions of the Military Staff Committee.

We look forward to cooperating actively with Kuwait and other partners, both inside and outside the Council, to continue making the Council more efficient, transparent and accountable. We very much look forward to hearing from the broader membership, our constituency, about their expectations from the Council.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, let me commend Kuwait for convening this open debate. Let me also thank Mr. Ian Martinfor his excellent briefing earlier today.

Discussing working methods is not a mere exercise in style or in process. The way the Council operates influences our impact in the field. It affects the lives of million of people, especially those suffering from crises and conflict.

Last year, we welcomed the adoption of the comprehensive new note by the President of the Security Council S/2017/507. The note is the legacy of Ambassador Koro Bessho of Japan during his time on the Council over the past two years. Now it is time for us to fully implement the note. I will focus on positive practices in three domains that we find particularly important: prevention, accountability and peacekeeping. And then I will add some additional suggestions for further improvements.

On my first point, that of prevention, we welcome the annual joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues of the Security Council with the African Union Peace and Security Council. They are a key tool to better understand the situation on the ground and to help prevent conflicts from breaking out. Better use of that tool would be an important step in addressing regional problems, providing shared solutions and preventing escalation.

Another important aspect in the new note 507 is the acknowledgment of the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations. We should enhance interaction with those actors, for instance, by inviting them more often as briefers in a debate, such as to the one we are having today. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, demonstrates that very clearly.

That brings me to my second point, that of accountability. We really welcome the fact that the Security Council's annual reports to the General Assembly include information on the work of its sanctions committees and of the international tribunals. This illustrates the point that the Council uses the means at its disposal to promote the international rule of law and to counter impunity.

That bring me to my third point, that of peacekeeping. The note contains a number of measures that can contribute to more effective peacekeeping, and, in particular, I refer to paragraph 91. We welcome the suggestion in the note for more interactive and focused consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries and other stakeholders in the meetings of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

That bring me to my additional suggestions for improving the working methods of the Council.

First, in order to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Council could explicitly weigh the means and options provided for by Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, guided by an inventory of past experiences.

Secondly, we need to foster the mechanisms aimed at monitoring compliance with Security Council resolutions. In that regard, enhancing cooperation with international legal mechanisms is essential. In that context, we express our concern about the continuing vacancy of the Ombudsperson for the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999).

Thirdly, we think that the role of the Military Staff Committee should be strengthened, especially when it comes to the performance of missions in relation to the mandates. In that Committee we need a more proactive and intensified dialogue between elected and permanent members.

Fourthly, as I have noted in the previous open debates on working methods, we fully support the French-Mexican initiative to limit the use of the veto in case of mass atrocities. That was also jut mentioned by our French colleague.

In conclusion, we need to fully implement the last update of note 507. That is the best way to ensure that the Council works effectively. Making the Security Council more effective via better working methods is crucial in order to uphold the principles of the Charter, to maintain international peace and security in the interests of the peoples of the world.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for convening such an important open debate. We also thank Mr. Martin, of the Security Council Report, for his informative briefing.

Although the working methods are not a substantive agenda item, they are one of the most important subjects that the Council has to address, since it is an awareness and understanding of those methods that put non-permanent members on an equal footing with Council members as they carry out their official duties. It also gives the general membership a better understanding of the workings of the Council. Today our work is still governed by the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, which were adopted in 1946. Although their provisional nature gives the Council greater flexibility, that flexibility also gives permanent members a disproportionate advantage over non-permanent ones. That is why the Security Council, through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, should be conducting dialogue and negotiations aimed at adopting definitive rules that are in line with the realities and dynamics of the twenty-first century.

Nevertheless, despite still managing with the provisional rules of procedure, we have come a long way since 1993, when we established the Informal Working Group and embarked on a productive path of systematizing, codifying and implementing our working methods. Almost 14 years passed between the adoption of the first note by the President (S/2004/939) on working methods and last year's adoption of the note contained in the annex to document S/2017/507. I would like to take this opportunity to echo my colleagues in acknowledging the work of the delegation of Japan and of Ambassador Koro Bessho in particular, whose leadership saw the adoption of the largest compendium to date on Security Council working methods.

Returning to the issue at hand, I note that over the years, we have been able to systematize many of the practices that govern our work. We have gone from an oral tradition, based on common practices, to a compendium that systematizes much of the Security Council's work. Among the most significant are the early election of new members and their participation as observers in all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, beginning on 1 October of the previous year, until they become full-fledged members in January. Such practices, now codified in note 507, ensure that elected members are better prepared when they assume their responsibilities as members of the Council. We would also like to highlight the improvements in the process of electing the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. Note 507 states that the process must end no later than 1 October and must include the participation of all members of the Council, making it more democratic, just and transparent. Nevertheless, despite these significant steps forward, there is still room for improvement. For example, we believe that at least one informal meeting of the Informal Working Group should be held during the selection process.

With regard to the subsidiary bodies, we should mention the Sanctions Committees. Sanctions have become one of the Organization's most frequently used tools, and their implementation depends entirely on the cooperation of all Member States. That is why we must all develop a better understanding of sanctions if we are to enhance their effectiveness. We need clear and systematized rules on the Sanctions Committees' working methods so that they are more accessible and transparent. Sanctioned countries must understand the sanctions mechanism in order to get sanctions lifted. Nor should sanctions be an end in themselves, which is why the underlying goals of each Sanctions Committee must be clear. Periodic reviews must be conducted to determine whether the sanctions are effective and if they are hurting local populations.

With regard to the issue of penholders, note 507 outlines key elements that represent a step forward, such as the idea that any member can be a penholder, reaffirming that all Council members must be able to participate in the preparation of documents, encouraging penholders to ensure that all resolutions that are not technical rollovers or presidential statements go through at least one round of informal consultations,

and ensuring that a reasonable period of time is allotted for all documents so as to give all members the time needed for analysis and consultations. However, despite that progress, it is the permanent members who are the penholders almost exclusively. The level of participation of elected members in the adoption of documents continues to be at the penholders' discretion. The same applies to the amount of time that is seen as sufficient and reasonable for considering a document. All of these points still require greater systematization and codification, and will surely be debated during the next review of note 507. For the time being, we must encourage more appointments of elected members as penholders on specific issues and we, as elected members, should work to achieve the effective implementation of what has been agreed.

We are also concerned about efforts to include items on the Council's agenda that are better suited to the mandate of other bodies in the United Nations system, an issue that the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia discussed much more eloquently. Moreover, the relationship between the Council and other organs of the system should be reviewed. It is very curious, for example, that the last time that the Council requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice was more than 40 years ago.

Finally, I should mention the structural reforms that the Council needs. My delegation believes that the veto is an anti-democratic and anachronistic privilege, and that the lack of equitable regional representation in the Council is one of the worst symptoms of how far behind the times it is. The overrepresentation of the Group of Western European and other States and the underrepresentation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia are a case in point. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, along with Africa, make up almost half of the members of the entire Organization but only one third of the members of the Council — none of them permanent and none with a veto right.

In conclusion, it is essential that we launch reforms that can lead to a Council that, along with its rules of procedure, is commensurate with the challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This is my first time addressing the Security Council in a formal meeting in my capacity as the Permanent Representative of China, and it is a privilege to be here. I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and my colleagues for their welcome. I look forward to working closely with everyone with the aim of jointly safeguarding world peace and stability and delivering on our responsibilities as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

I would like to congratulate Kuwait on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to assure it of China's support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Kazakhstan for presiding over the Council last month and to commend Ambassador Umarov and his team for their outstanding diplomatic prowess and competence. China welcomes Kuwait's initiative in convening today's meeting, and we thank Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of Security Council Report, for his briefing.

The Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Security Council the important mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Currently, the global security situation remains complex, with local conflicts breaking out and terrorism and other security threats interweaving.

The Security Council, as the core of the United Nations collective security mechanism, shoulders the enormous responsibility of tackling international security threats and challenges, which is a Herculean task. In recent years, the Council has convened on many occasions to hold open debates on its working methods for in-depth discussions on this issue. This is a demonstration of its steadfast commitment to improving the Council's working method and enhancing its effectiveness. China has been working with other Council members to push for further the progress in that regard.

There has been a palpable increase in the number of open debates of the Council. Coordination among the Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Security Council and other United Nations entities has been strengthened. Regular exchanges with the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations have continued. Engagement with relevant regional organizations has expanded. The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has consistently noted valid practices of the Council, put forward recommendations in that regard and achieved great results.

China supports continued improvement of the Council's working methods to better position it to

deliver on its mandate more efficiently and to respond effectively to threats to international peace and security. In this vein, I wish to make the following observations.

First of all, we should stay focused on key issues and ensure effective execution of mandates. It is essential to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which is the fundamental guide to the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs. The Charter contains clear provisions on the responsibilities of the Council and other United Nations organs. The Council must focus its resources and energy on addressing major and urgent issues concerning international peace and security and improve the impact of its action. In deliberating thematic issues, the Council needs to coordinate with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies so that can all play their respective roles and avoid duplication.

Secondly, we should stay committed to democratic consultations and collective decision-making. In the process of decision-making, full consultations should be conducted with a view to achieving consensus. Efforts should be made to ensure that all members have adequate time to examine draft resolutions and presidential statements. We should refrain from steamrolling divisive draft resolutions, seek the broadest possible consensus and safeguard the Council's authority and unity.

Thirdly, we should enhance information exchanges and value the views of all parties. The Council needs to heed the views of its broad membership, the countries concerned in particular. China supports the Council in its effort to strengthen coordination with regional organizations, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to leverage their expertise in addressing local issues and their unique strength with regard to geography, history and culture. The Council should more actively engage troop-contributing countries and enhance information sharing through mechanisms, such as the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and meetings with troop-contributing countries. It should also weigh the views and concerns of troop-contributing countries during mission deployment and mandate adjustments.

The General Assembly intergovernmental negotiations provide an important forum for Member States to d scuss Council reform. As such, its role as the main avenue of deliberations on this issue needs to be safeguarded.

China attaches great importance to Council reform and supports necessary regional reform initiatives to increase representation and the voice of developing countries, in particular African countries as a matter of priority, and to enhance the Council's authority and efficiency. China is ready to continue working with all Members States and to be guided by the Member State-led principle.

With regard to the five reform clusters, we strive for patient and democratic consultations in a quest for a package resolution with the broadest possible consensus. I would like to reiterate that setting artificial deadlines, steamrollering half-baked proposals or initiating textual negotiations in the absence of requisite conditions will only undermine the credibility of such negotiations and is anything but helpful for membership unity and the sound development of intergovernmental negotiations.

China supports Kuwait in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We are ready to work with all parties to engage in assessing innovations; support the improvement of the Council's working methods with concrete action; and encourage the Council to conduct its work in a more effective, transparent, democratic and impartial manner and to play an important and constructive role in maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish to also inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing today and for his tireless and ceaseless efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency for February. I would also like to thank you and your colleagues for the kind words that you have had for the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural

Questions in the past two years and, in that connection, for my delegation as well.

We feel that this is an important meeting and we appreciate the fact that the Council regularly listens to the views of the wider membership on its working methods. I shall follow your instructions, Mr. President, and distribute the full text of my statement and try to be concise.

Codification and practice are mutually reinforcing and necessary to improve the working methods of the Security Council. While we were in the Council, Japan tried to tackle both. Today I would like to share a few observations from Japan's recent Council membership.

First, we need to do things that may seem simple, like listening to each other — to what others say in Council meetings or consultations. We all have our national positions and important engagements, but unless we at least try to be in the room and listen to each other, effective action by the Council is less likely to be produced. In that connection, how the Council conducts its open debates may also be further explored. I would encourage the President, if I may, to be present until the end of the open debate to listen to the views of the wider membership. Presidential summaries can also be useful.

Secondly, the drafting process of Council outcome documents remains at the core of the Council's working methods. Any Council member with willingness and ideas should be encouraged to take the initiative. The Chairs of sanctions committees may be in a position to contribute more on the drafting of sanctions-related resolutions. Troop-contributing countries may be able to contribute on mandate renewals. Co-penholding may not solve everything, but could be explored further in practice.

What is more important, I believe, is how the negotiations are conducted. Penholders have the heavy responsibility of making every effort to explore the best possible outcome through an inclusive process by having face-to-face negotiations, providing sufficient time for the consideration of drafts by all members, being receptive to inputs and suggestions, or proactively reaching out to those outside of the Council with expertise, such as troop-contributing countries, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission or regional countries.

Given that, there may be cases in which urgency on the ground necessitates a flexible, expeditious process. We should not lose sight of the fact that what is most important is for the Council to take the best possible action in the timeliest manner for the sake of international peace and security.

Much of what I have just said is referred to in presidential note S/2017/507. We should make the best use of the latter, and try to develop further practices whereby we can. I have every confidence that Kuwait will contribute to the improvement of the Council's working methods as the new Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

I would like to conclude my remarks by stating that improving working methods is not the end. Reforming the composition of the Security Council to reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century can be effective in dealing with the unprecedented challenges that we face today. Japan will continue to work with all Member States towards that goal.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): Brazil is a staunch advocate of a more transparent Security Council. I therefore thank the Government of Kuwait and commend you, Sir, for organizing this open debate.

I will address two sets of issues: first, the working methods within the Security Council, while focusing on aspects related to the use of force, and, secondly, the Council's methods of work in its relations with other organs and interested Member States.

We should devote more attention to the working methods of the Council as they relate to the use of force. Communications issued under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations — that is, invoking self-defence — and the follow-up of the relevant resolutions authorizing the use of military force are two cases in point. We have witnessed an increase in the number of letters submitted to the Council seeking to justify military action, especially in the context of counter-terrorism. The current practice indicates that there is ample room for improvement with regard to the content, timing and circulation of Article 51 letters. A proper follow-up of such communications is also needed, thereby ensuring that the obligations set out in the Charter are fulfilled.

It is critical that States provide sufficient information regarding the attack based on which self-defence is invoked so as to allow for the appraisal of proportionality and necessity. While the Charter demands that measures to implement self-defence be reported immediately, it far too often happens with delays. The flow of information directed to non-members of the Council should also be improved. Brazil suggests that a special section dedicated to listing all communications received under Article 51 be created on the Council's website.

I now wish to draw attention to another aspect of the working methods of the Council concerning the use of force — that is, the exceptional circumstances in which it authorizes military interventions. The implementation of such resolutions must be responsibly carried out so as not to harm those whose very protection is invoked. Action must be judicious, proportionate and strictly limited to the objectives of the mandate. To that end, Brazil has suggested that the Security Council draw inspiration from the relevant peacekeeping and sanctions regimes in order to ensure that such resolutions include sunset clauses, demand adequate reporting and establish panels of experts to monitor their implementation. We live in challenging times in which we cannot allow for the erosion of the authority of the Charter, especially regarding the rules on the use of force.

Allow me now to address the working methods of the Council with regard to other organs and interested Member States. I will focus on dialogue with troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs), with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and with international courts. States that have a special interest in a substantive matter under consideration by the Council should be allowed to take part in its consultations so that their views are taken into account. That applies not only to countries on the Council's agenda, but also to TCCs and PCCs. That interaction should be meaningful, inclusive, active and dynamic so as to allow an exchange of views that genuinely contributes to the review of the mandate. That is particularly important at a time when the number of fatalities in peacekeeping operations is increasing owing to, among other reasons, the gap between the expectations arising from Security Council mandates and the delivery capacity in the field.

Deliberations of the Council would also benefit if it exchanged views more frequently with the countries chairing the Peacebuilding Commission's configurations. That could be done informally — even at the expert level, and in addition to the invitation to deliver formal briefings to the Council, which is a practice we much appreciate. In that regard, we encourage the Secretariat to make the proper arrangements to allow Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Special Envoys to brief the PBC configurations prior to Security Council meetings so that the Commission can fully play its advisory role vis-à-vis the Security Council. The Council could also consider inviting the Chairs of PBC configurations to join some of its official missions. The Chairs of PBC configurations maintain close contact with national leaderships and senior United Nations officials in the field, make frequent visits to the country and benefit from information provided by a network of embassies that, in some cases, is broader than those of Security Council members. That potential could be better explored.

I would like to make two comments regarding the relationship with international tribunals. First, there is no compelling reason for the annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice to be private. On the contrary, the role of the Court in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the strengthening of the international rule of law attests to the need to make such meetings public. Secondly, with regard to referrals to the International Criminal Court, it is neither fair nor sustainable that its financial costs fall solely on the States parties to the Rome Statute. That issue should be addressed by the General Assembly, the organ that holds exclusive competence to decide on the United Nations budget.

Brazil presented a number of proposals aimed at improving the working methods of the Council. It remains difficult, however, to see how to achieve breakthroughs in such an area without the expansion of the Council's membership. In the view of the majority of United Nations States Members, the best way to enhance the Council's dynamics and to ensure that its decisions are more legitimate and effective is the creation of new permanent and non-permanent seats. That would allow for countries committed to a more transparent, efficient, accessible and accountable Council to acquire the expertise and ability required to help modernize it from within.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): I thank you, Mr. President, for remaining in the Chamber and listening to the non-members of the Security Council as well. I would like to take this opportunity to say that Hungary appreciates the intense work led by Japan as former Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and that of countries currently represented on the Council, as the wider United Nations membership benefits from the recently adopted note by the President S/2017/507, which not only provides the most complete summary of the Council's working methods thus far but also introduces many important developments.

First of all, we congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I believe that it is unique that you are affording us the time to talk about this matter in the Security Council. In order to join forces in trying to find ways and means to shape a more effective Council, let me reiterate the views of Hungary while fully supporting the statement that will be delivered on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

Hungary acknowledges the efforts to achieve greater transparency and consistency when it comes to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. However, we believe that current practices and measures should be used more effectively in some areas. The Council's annual report to the General Assembly should contain a more analytical, substantive and comprehensive evaluation of its work. The inclusion of the topic in the updated note by the President S/2017/507 is a step forward, but there is still room for the Council to continue to expand consultations and cooperation to non-Council members, in particular troop- and police-contributing countries, and to regional organizations.

We highly appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General, in his letter addressed to the President of the Council of 7 September 2017 (S/2017/753), urged the international community to take concerted efforts to prevent further escalation of the crisis in Myanmar, as we support a proactive role for the Security Council and consider it very important. We strongly support the proposal that the Council increase the number of public meetings, interactive briefings, informative interactive dialogues and Arria Formula meetings. More wrap-up sessions would enhance the flow of substantive information, and thereby assist the wider membership to better understand the Council's positions. We welcome the developments concerning the adoption of the outcomes of open debates. We encourage the Council to take into account the contributions made by non-members.

We believe that the Council should use existing tools to prevent mass atrocities, and take into account the results of the 2015 review processes of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and women and peace and security. That would improve the Council's response to atrocity crimes and give it an opportunity to emerge from its self-imposed silos.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group and one of the 114 signatories, to date, of the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, Hungary advocates for refraining voluntarily from the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. We encourage all Member States that have not yet done so to support the initiative.

The role of the International Criminal Court is vital to ending impunity and bringing perpetrators to justice when national mechanisms for criminal accountability are not available or not satisfactory. The Security Council is given a special role under the Rome Statute, as it can refer situations involving non-State parties to the Court in order to hold perpetrators to account. Given the privileged role of the Council in the Rome Statute system, the Council should utilize its referral power in a consistent manner to ensure accountability and justice whenever necessary. Overall, the Council should also aim for more clear-cut communication to clearly convey its work to the outside world.

We would like to conclude by calling for the fullest possible implementation of existing measures and improved measures that further strengthen the Council's working methods, with a view to making sure no drawback is possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate on an issue that is of interest and importance to the entire membership of the United Nations. I also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing.

As the organ of the United Nations tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the comity of nations, the Security

Council — its work and the way it chooses to organize it — is as a matter of interest for all. The edifice of the working methods of the Council is erected on the nebulous expanse of rules of procedure that remain provisional even after 70 years and on a series of quasi-formal presidential notes. Therefore, the field is rich in terms of opportunities for making practical suggestions for improvement. However, I will focus on the thus far neglected but growing arena of work of the Security Council's subordinate sanctions-related organs.

There are 14 such sanctions committees established under various resolutions of the Council. Drawing on delegated authority from the Council, those committees perform the functions of the Council in terms of designation of individuals, entities and undertakings deemed to be threats to international peace and security. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2017, those committees have listed a total of 678 individuals and 385 entities as subject to United Nation targeted sanctions and restrictive measures such as assets freezes, travel bans and arms embargoes. In terms of numbers, those decisions far exceed the outcomes arrived at by the Security Council in open meetings during public sittings over the same period. That large number of decisions flows from the universe of sanctions committees that comprise representatives of Council members who decide on behalf of the Council. Those decisions are binding on Member States.

Yet each of those decisions of the sanctions committees is taken beyond the gaze of the public, with no explanation of the inputs that go into the decision-making. For want of a better depiction, it would appear that the committees form the subterranean universe of the Council. That universe functions in accordance with decision-making methods that are not the same as those of a normal functioning Council. For example, in practical terms, the decisions of the sanctions committees can be placed on hold or blocked by any of the 15 members of the committees. While decision-making on Security Council resolutions is based on clearly defined thresholds provided for in the Charter of the United Nations and the provisional rules of procedure, in the case of the subterranean universe, each and every one of the Council's members now has an effective veto on decision-making.

What is worse is that no one except the members of the subterranean universe is aware of the use of a veto while deciding on a reference made to any of the sanctions committees. Such is the effective impact of that anonymous veto that a proposal that has been blocked is not even made public. In addition, no rationale is provided for the anonymous vetoing of a submission. Unlike in the Security Council, where vetoes are cast in public meetings and explanations made publicly, in the subterranean universe no such practice exists; in fact, the principles of anonymity and unanimity reign.

That is not the only difference between the working methods of the subterranean universe of the Council and the official Council meetings. No one other than the members of the Council is aware of the total number of decisions made by the sanctions committees. For example, in 2017, by our estimates, an additional 53 individuals and 19 entities were listed by the sanctions committees. However, how many others were considered but placed on hold or blocked from being listed is neither available on the record nor made public. The rationale for the use of the anonymous veto is never provided to the general membership.

Even though the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan — your predecessor as President of the Security Council last month, Mr. President — has set high standards of transparency by issuing press statements after every consultation of the Council, no such practice exists in the subterranean universe of the Sanctions Committees. The challenges relating to the Sanctions Committees' working methods have to do not only with transparency and accountability, but also with the diversity of the mechanisms for reviewing decision-making in cases of differences among members. For example, if after consultations consensus still cannot be reached, two of the Committees provide that the matter may be referred to the Security Council by the member concerned; in four other Committees, the matter may be referred to the Security Council by the Chair; in six more Committees, the matter may be submitted to the Security Council, without specifying by whom; in one other Committee, the matter may be referred to the Security Council by the Chair or by the Committee member concerned; and in one final Committee, we could not find any explicit option for referring the matter to the Council. The divergences do not end there. While 13 Sanctions Committees function without the need for an ombudsperson to submit recommendations for a review, one specific Sanctions Committee provides for an Ombudsperson.

Clearly, there exists a case for the Council to address the anomalies in the working methods of its subterranean universe of Sanctions Committees. They

not only affect the efficiency and credibility of the Council's work but also the larger membership, which has to implement the Council's decisions. It is in that spirit that my country, along with so many others, has called for reform of the Security Council's composition and working methods. Until that happens, we want to make it clear that we do not aspire to a utopia and nor do we believe that the current situation is dystopian. Our objective in pointing out these issues is to move beyond the status quo to what we may term a protopia — a state that envisages a better tomorrow than yesterday, even if it is only a little better. We hope that this debate, Mr. President, and what you add to the work done by your predecessors as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, will lead to a protopian Council that strives every day to make its work methods better than they were the day before, even if only slightly.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I also thank Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of the Security Council Report, for his excellent briefing this morning. We are grateful to him and his team for the work they are doing in relation to our subject.

I am speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group. As many of those here know, we are a group of 25 Member States from every region. Our objective is to encourage better working methods in United Nations bodies, particularly the Security Council.

The working methods of the Security Council have been a subject of discussion almost since the creation of the United Nations and the Council itself. Over the years, there has been some progress. Most recently, the adoption last August of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507, annex), after a process of revision successfully led by Japan, has given us a coherent overview of the practices and working methods discussed so far. But we must acknowledge that overall progress has been slow and the implementation of what has been agreed on has been uneven. In order to safeguard the effectiveness and reputation of the Council and the United Nations at large, and to gain the support of the wider United Nations membership for Security Council decisions, we believe it is important to implement these practices in a consistent manner and not to backslide from previous decisions and commitments. Today I want to highlight four areas where ACT would like to see specific improvements.

The first has to do with enabling the 10 elected members of the Council to be fully involved in all of its business. We encourage all measures aimed at involving the non-permanent members early on in the Council's business and ensuring continuity. In that respect, we welcome the fact that in the past two years, starting in October, incoming members have been invited to observe closed Security Council meetings and consultations. We also welcome and encourage the elected members' active engagement in wrap-up sessions and interactive briefings on the monthly work of the Council. However, more can be done to ensure they have access to as many resources and documents as possible at an early stage. Furthermore, coordinating the incoming elected members with both the outgoing members and those staying on the Council for another year is essential to ensuring unity and coherence in the Security Council's work.

Secondly, the Council's drafting and decision-making practices need some attention. Assuming that the penholdership system persists, the elected members should be enabled to engage actively on all issues, including those that are particularly important to them and where they have particular expertise. More penholderships could be entrusted to elected members. Another possibility for ensuring that could be by increasing the use of co-penholderships, and we encourage Council members to discuss jointly deciding on the distribution of penholderships and co-penholderships. With regard to decision-making, the revised note 507 underlines the importance of holding at least one round of consultations with all Council members on drafts before their adoption. That is crucial to ensuring that all members have an opportunity to engage and fulfil the responsibility that the wider membership has entrusted to them.

Thirdly, ACT strongly believes that the rule of law should apply within the United Nations as well as outside it, particularly in situations in which United Nations actions directly affect individual rights. The United Nations in general, and the Security Council in particular, should lead the way in that regard. Resolution 1904 (2009), of 17 December 2009, which established the Office of the Ombudsperson to the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989

(2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, was a significant step forward in improving the fairness and transparency of the sanctions regimes on Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant and enhancing the rule of law in the implementation of Council decisions. We strongly urge the Security Council to complete the appointment procedure for the post of Ombudsperson, which has been vacant since August of last year, without further delay. We also call on it to extend the Ombudsperson's mandate, which has been further improved in the meantime, to other sanctions regimes.

Fourthly, the relationship of the Council with the membership and other bodies is an area where we have been happy to note some positive developments over the years. It now has regular interactions, for instance, with the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in its role as an advisory body to the Council. We also note a trend whereby Council members choose to speak in open meetings more often, thereby contributing to increased transparency. While there are situations or stages of deliberations on certain items that require closed-door meetings or consultations, we encourage Council members to hold open meetings whenever possible and to seek interaction with Member States, other bodies and civil-society representatives who can provide useful advice to the Council. Close interaction is also essential if we are to avoid situations where the Security Council finds itself adrift from the larger membership because the use of the veto has prevented it from taking decisions. In that regard, ACT encourages all States to adhere to and implement the ACT code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Let me join previous speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this debate so early in your presidency of the Security Council and for your chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters.

The working methods of the Security Council need to be transparent, understandable and clear to allow for the adequate participation of all concerned. Apparently, that is not always, and not entirely, the case. That is why we are particularly grateful to Japan, which did us a great service by documenting the developments and emerging practices in the revision of note by the President S/2017/507, as adopted last August. It now concerns the implementation of note 507, as many speakers before me have pointed out. I would like to make three suggestions on how to improve implementation in concrete terms.

The first suggestion concerns the process for developing Security Council products. We welcome that the Council, in the new version of note 507, now expressly encourages all its members to become penholders. In principle, any Council member can serve in that function. However, in practice, the list of actual penholder countries continues to be very short. We hope that a more inclusive practice will emerge, as stipulated in the note.

We also share the Council's concern, as expressed in the new note, that more needs to be done to improve the openness and flexibility of the drafting process. However, the note's proposals to that effect focus entirely on the internal workings of the Council. They are addressed only to its members. We would like to invite the Council members to go further and to think about progressive ideas to better involve the wider United Nations membership earlier in the drafting of proposals to ensure more buy-in and support from non-Council Member States.

The second suggestion is about the relationship between the Security Council and the police- and troop-contributing countries. As the Council increasingly mandates peacekeeping operations in high-risk environments, more timely, interactive and action-oriented consultations among the Council, the contributing States and the Secretariat are needed. In that regard, the revised note 507 contains a number of proposals, which should be translated into consistent practice.

My third point relates to the relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The revised note 507 elaborates on the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission as "an intergovernmental advisory body". It notes the Council's intention to regularly request, deliberate and draw upon the Commission's specific, strategic and targeted advice.

We are convinced that we should strengthen the links between those two bodies to enhance the ability of the United Nations to move more seamlessly from crisis response to long-term peacebuilding. Germany was recently elected Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilidng Commission. We are ready to work with all interested partners to enhance the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role. For example, one idea would be to regularly invite the Chair of the PBC and the country-specific configurations to participate in public Security Council meetings.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize one thought that many speakers before me pointed out, namely, that reforming the working methods should continue. It is very important that, ideally, t ıat should go hand in hand with more fundamental reforms, such as reforming the Council's composition to more accurately reflect today's political realities. However, clearly, that is a subject for another day and another forum.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Stener (Norway): Let me first say that Norway is part of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, and therefore of course fully adheres to the statement made a little earlier by the representative of Switzerland. We are very pleased to see the steady progress achieved in the working methods of the Security Council during the past decade. We would like to thank Japan for its tireless and fruitful efforts as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions of the Security Council. We also welcome the most recent edition of what is known as the *Green Book*.

To maintain momentum in that process, it is necessary for the Security Council to continuously and periodically conduct constructive debates on its working methods. We would like to thank Kuwait for organizing this tenth annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council at the start of its membership as an elected member of the Council. Kuwait can count on the support and cooperation of Norway in its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group.

We recognize the need to strike a balance between gaining the support of the wider United Nations membership and enabling the Council to take prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security. We are convinced that the full implementation of the agreed measures described in note S/2017/507 in the daily business of the Council will be crucial to maintaining that balance. We call on all members of the Security Council to put those measures into effect without delay.

In particular, we welcome the note's reference to the importance of annual joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and of the Security Council's intention to regularly seek the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We are encouraged by the transparency and inclusivity that guided the process of selecting a new Secretary-General last year, the momentum for United Nations reform that is currently energizing the work of the Secretariat and Member States, and the ongoing efforts to reform the Security Council. A relevant and strong United Nations requires an efficient, transparent and inclusive Security Council to meet today's challenges to international peace and security and to improve global governance.

I can assure the Council that Norway will contribute to a constructive dialogue among Member States with a view to achieving further progress.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me first to congratulate the State of Kuwait on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to convey my delegation's appreciation for the convening of this open debate on the working methods of the Council. Indeed, it is an interesting topic for discussion, which is needed now more than ever in order to examine and identify practical and efficient methods to confront the real challenges of international peace and security.

In view of the time limit, I will highlight the following points, which are based on the Charter of the United Nations and, upon their implementation, can improve the working methods of the Council and enhance its efficiency in fulfilling its primary responsibility.

Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum and should be the exception rather than the rule. The establishment of subsidiary organs, mechanisms or formats by the Council should be in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the Council

has a responsibility to ensure that it functions within the limits of its mandates. For example, some of the activities undertaken by the Security Council Affairs Division clearly fall beyond those outlined in note S/2016/44 by the President of the Security Council regarding tasks under resolution 2231 (2015), while it resists undertaking activities assigned to it under the same note. Despite the fact that the Council has been repeatedly informed by us and some members of the Council, those deficiencies continue to exist in reports of the Secretary-General each time the Council discusses this issue.

The annual reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical. They should assess the work of the Council, including cases in which the Council has failed to act. They should also include the views expressed by members during the consideration of agenda items. In addition, we call on the Council to elaborate on the circumstances under which it adopts the various outcomes, be they resolutions, presidential statements, press statements or other elements for the press.

Pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter, the Council should submit special reports for consideration by the General Assembly. However, it does not do that.

The Council should ensure that its monthly assessments are comprehensive and analytical. The General Assembly may consider proposing parameters for the elaboration of such assessments. The Council should fully take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Charter. The Council should cease its ongoing attempts to shift issues on the agenda of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council over to the Security Council and the encroachment by the latter on the functions and powers of the Assembly.

It is absolutely vital for the credibility of the Security Council to reject the intentions to turn it into a tool to pursue national political interests and agendas. Unfortunately, it is happening. The intention to use the Council only as a tool for more dangerous ends could not have been made clearer than in the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the United States at the meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on 5 March 2006:

> "It is critical that we use the Council to help mobilize international public opinion. Rest assured, though, we are not relying on the Security Council as the only tool in our toolbox to address this problem."

It seems that the current United States Administration is even more enthusiastic now to follow that reckless and failed pattern of regarding the Security Council as its toolbox.

Two outrageous examples of such an approach occurred in January. On 5 January, the United States pushed for an emergency meeting (see S/PV.8152) on an issue that flagrantly falls outside of the scope of its mandate. On 29 January, the United States Mission set up a show in Washington, D.C., to present the members of the Security Council with some fabricated evidence, such as a Saudi-supplied destroyed, yet intact, missile.

Those examples are discredit the Security Council, especially when recalling the increasing list of Security Council failures to take the slightest action when it comes to genuine issues, such as the long-standing occupation of Palestinian territory by the Israeli regime or the most catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen after almost three years of war. Those failures of the Council, attributable to the obstructionist approach by the United States, is a matter of disappointment and frustration for multilateral diplomacy.

Finally, I hope this open debate will help to render the Council more democratic, representative, transparent and accountable in all its activities, approaches and procedures, functioning more efficiently and effectively, as well as focusing on its real responsibility in maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): First, we would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. The matter of the working methods of the Council remains one of the most pertinent issues before the Council, as it relates to the manner in which the Council seeks to resolve crises affecting the entire globe. We therefore welcome this open debate, which itself is in keeping with the provisions of the note by the President S/2017/507, which calls for greater

involvement by non-members of the Council in its work and for creating transparency.

From its inception, the structure of the Council has been contested particularly because it charges 15 of the United Nations States Members with the responsibility to pursue and maintain peace and security on behalf of 193. Furthermore, it allows for only five to prevent progress on any matter, thereby securing the interests of one at the expense of us all. Each Member State of the United Nations has very specific contextual circumstances, and restoring or maintaining peace in each of our States and/or regions requires an awareness and account of the particular complexities entailed. Therefore, transparency and inclusiveness do not come as a matter of courtesy, but necessity, if the Council is to be effective.

The newest iteration of note 507, issued in 2017, further improves the work of the Council. However, the test is not what is in the concept note itself, but rather the test is whether the Council is willing to implement what is contained therein. South Africa stresses that note 507, as well as the Council's provisional rules of procedure, should become permanent so that this organ can be more effective, accountable and predicable, with well understood rules. It is our strong belief that the more the Council shares information, consults and accepts the views from those relevant to a particular conflict, the more operative, accountable and transparent it will be. Further to that, the more responsive the Council becomes, the better placed it will be to meet the challenges presented by a continuously more complex world.

In that regard, my delegation would like to thank Portugal, Argentina, Angola and Japan for their sterling work in moving that matter forward as respective Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. We welcome Kuwait in assuming that role, and we pledge our full support to Kuwait's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group. I would like to highlight four practical suggestions that South Africa believes can help to develop a more effective Security Council.

First, I would like to see the implementation of the commitment in note 507 for more regular consultations and coordination between the Council and troop- and police-contributing countries. That is specifically necessary when considering the renewal of mandates. Such consultations are vital mechanisms to ensure peacekeeping mandates are informed by the knowledge of realities on the ground that the troop- and police-contributing countries have and that expectations are realistic and well understood. Such consultations are also important throughout the life cycle of a mission, as well as in the planning and transition phases.

Secondly, the importance of annual joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) is quite essential. The Council has consistently agreed to continue to expand consultations and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, as set forth in note 507, undertaking to invite relevant organizations to participate in the Council's public and private meetings, when appropriate. Additionally in note 507, the Council commits itself to continue to informally consult with regional organizations when drafting, inter alia, resolutions, presidential statements and press statements, as appropriate.

The African Union and other regional bodies have the comparative advantage of a nuanced understanding of their own region and being able to respond quickly to crises as they occur. We should avoid a practice where the Council is selective in its approach and relationships with regional bodies are merely utilized in times of political convenience. The language in note 507 could therefore be strengthened to emphasize the necessity of such cooperation, in the light of Council resolutions, such as resolution 2033 (2012), adopted subsequent to the issuance of note 507, which provides an array of strategies that could ensure strategic coherence. We therefore thank Secretary-General António Guterres for putting more energy into strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and the AU on many fronts in order to deal with the issues of peace and security.

Thirdly, South Africa stresses the need to continue enhancing the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In its advisory capacity, the PBC serves as a platform that contributes to improving coordination and enhancing coherence among the United Nations, the AU and other international actors in the areas of sustaining peace in Africa and preventing the region from relapsing into conflict. We also believe that the Council could do more to draw on the expertise of the PBC, in particular during the renewal of mission mandates.

Fourthly, in note 507 the Security Council commits itself to seeking the views of Member States that are parties to a conflict and/or other interested and affected parties. That commitment should be applied uniformly. Therefore, it is necessary for the Council, as a matter of principle, to always consult with all the relevant parties to a conflict before deliberating on a matter, to ensure that it has at its disposal all the relevant facts.

In conclusion, while we fully support the implementation of working methods that improve the inclusivity and transparency of the work of the Council, those incremental changes do nothing to address the Council's structural problems. While it still remains that the membership of the Council and the right to the veto are determined by long-outdated historical circumstances, no number of changes to its methods will prevent the interests of a few hindering the maintenance and pursuit of peace and prosperity for all. There needs to be a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The goal of African countries is to be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, in particular in the Security Council. We must therefore stress the fundamental need to urgently reform the Council if we are to avoid further erosion of not only the legitimacy and credibility of this organ, but also its ultimate effectiveness in a world that is very different from the one that existed when the United Nations was founded, over 70 years ago.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina thanks the Kuwaiti presidency for convening this open debate on a subject in which Argentina has always been particularly interested. We also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his valuable briefing, as well as the Japanese delegation for the excellent work carried out during its recent chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which led to the adoption of the very comprehensive note by the President S/2017/507, on the working methods of the Council.

In that regard, we agree with those who maintain that the new agreed note is both a valuable tool for increasing the transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Council and a balanced text that can serve as a useful guide for the working methods of agreed measures or best practices. Among its new elements, we highlight its reference to the intention of Council members to request, examine and regularly take advantage of specific advice from the Peacebuilding Commission.

Argentina has historically advocated the need for constant efforts to improve transparency, inclusiveness, openness, democratization and efficiency in the work of the Security Council. In that vein, we are guided by the conviction that, without impairing the effectiveness of decision-making, the Council can, and should, be more transparent and democratic in its relationship with the broader membership of the United Nations.

It is worth remembering that, during its presidency of the Security Council in February 2000, it was Argentina that pushed for the adoption of a note by the President of the Security Council, whereby newly elected members were invited to participate in informal consultations as observers during the month prior to the start of their term as elected members of this organ. During its 2005-2006 mandate, Argentina also promoted and supported various initiatives aimed at achieving greater transparency and access of Member States to the Council.

During Argentina's last chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions — a position that Argentina occupied in 2013-2014 — numerous presidential notes were adopted, on topics such as consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, dialogue with non-member countries of the Council and other bodies, the participation of Council members in drafting Council products and their broader responsibility for drafting and the continuity of the work of its subsidiary bodies, among others.

Argentina deems it essential to periodically examine the implementation of note S/2017/507 and other relevant notes, identify successful practices and possible deficiencies and consider making necessary adjustments. In that regard, Argentina urges the Informal Working Group to continue working towards a single, comprehensive document, so as to consolidate and streamline all decisions on working methods.

The Council's dialogue with bodies, be they inside or outside the United Nations system, is essential for the fulfilment of its functions. Among the bodies mentioned in note S/2013/515, adopted under the Argentine presidency, are the Peacebuilding Commission, the International Criminal Court and humanitarian assistance agencies. The Security Council has myriad responsibilities and, to fulfil them, a certain amount

of coordination with other stakeholders is necessary. However, Argentina discourages the Security Council, whose function is to maintain international peace and security, from absorbing the functions of other bodies.

Among the issues on which the Council has not made substantive progress is the matter of due process in the Council's sanctions committees. Argentina favours expanding the establishment of an Ombudsman in each of the Council's sanctions committees. The other issue in that regar is the follow-up of referrals made by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court. The Council periodically receives the requisite reports from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, in accordance with its own resolutions, but takes no action accordingly, even in cases where the Court reports that the cooperation required by Council resolutions has not been provided. What both issues have in common is their ability to affect the credibility of the Council if they are not promptly addressed.

Finally, we reiterate that what is at stake in improving the working methods of the Council is the culture of decision-making in this organ and the effectiveness of its performance. The task of reviewing and updating, in response to the demands made by the international community for democratization, greater inclusion, accountability and transparency in the Council, continues to be an important objective that my country endorses. Argentina reaffirms and pledges its best efforts to continue contributing to that process.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate. In the deliberations on this topic, we should always bear in mind that the Security Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations. That is why the working methods of the Security Council are an issue that concerns the entire United Nations membership.

Many challenges to the better functioning of the Organization are a result of the lack of transparency, accountability, effectiveness and democracy in the Security Council. The working methods of the Council are at the heart of those shortcomings, which have a direct impact on the critical undertakings of the United Nations as a whole.

We remain convinced that the more transparency the Council displays in undertaking its work, the more accountable it will be. The more it shares information, consults and accepts input, the more effective it will become. Moreover, a Council that is more responsive to the United Nations membership will be better placed to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world. It would be difficult to say that we have reached this point.

We acknowledge that some progress has been achieved in the last few years in improving the Council's working methods. Much of note 507 addresses the ways in which the Council communicates with the outside world and the degree to which information about the Council is available and accessible. Yet there is still room for improvement in terms of more informative briefings and the timely availability of draft resolutions and presidential statements, and certainly a decrease in the frequency of closed meetings is needed for a meaningful interaction. Greater transparency is also necessary in the functioning of the Security Council subsidiary organs, which should be encouraged to further interact with the United Nations membership. The Council should not miss opportunities to get views beyond those of Council member States.

Another improvement would be to better incorporate conflict prevention into the Security Council agenda. There is broad consensus among Member States on the need to enhance our efforts on prevention, including through mediation efforts. Consolidating the Security Council's role in prevention by making the best possible use of the tools at its disposal to prevent conflict is vital. To do so, the Council needs to be able to act in an informed manner. Current experience indicates that the Council often finds itself responding to crises in an incremental manner, making greater use of the tools at its disposal only as situations deteriorate.

The use of the veto has also proved to hamper the most important role of the Council in a given situation, not least in the early phases of a conflict. We believe that better outcomes could be achieved and more humanitarian tragedies prevented if the tools at the Council's disposal were utilized much earlier, without resort to the veto as an instrument for advancing national interests. In this manner, we see the work of the Council as being complementary to that of the other organs of the United Nations, with which it needs to remain in synergy.

Needless to say, better coordination of the Security Council with the General Assembly, the Economic

and Social Council and the Secretariat, as well as with the Peacebuilding Commission, is crucial. Greater interaction with regional organizations as well as troop- and police-contributing countries would also undoubtedly contribute to the Council's effectiveness.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that we consider the issue of working methods as one of the components of the broader Security Council reform agenda. At the same time, our firm belief is that updating the Council's methods of work cannot be a substitute for engaging in more substantive talks on Security Council reform. We must continue to seek a constructive solution by identifying a common denominator to channel the debate on the Council reform agenda. I will not go into the details of our position on this issue here, as I made that position clear during the intergovernmental negotiations last week, in addition to the remarks made by the United for Consensus group.

Before I conclude, I would like to stress that we look forward to continuing to contribute constructively to the ongoing discussion on improving the working methods of the Council. Increased transparency and effectiveness will further enhance the legitimacy of this body in the eyes of all Member States. That, in turn, will only strengthen the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, to the benefit of us all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me also begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. My delegation also welcomes Kuwait's assumption of the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We all acknowledge that to respond to the increasingly complex, overlapping and interconnected challenges to global peace and security, the Council must become more accountable, inclusive, transparent and effective, an imperative that demands and warrants continued improvement in its working methods.

Presidential note S/2017/507, of August 2017, addresses the Council's practice in a holistic manner. Our focus should remain on the effective and consistent implementation of the measures identified in that note.

In this regard, I would like to highlight four key points and make four key suggestions.

First, enhanced engagement of the Council with the wider United Nations membership is critical. We all have a stake in the maintenance of international peace and security. The number and proportion of open meetings of the Council must therefore be increased.

Similarly, meaningful participation of States with a legitimate stake in the Council's deliberations should be ensured throughout the decision-making process. This is especially true for troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries, Pakistan being among the more consistent and leading ones.

While we are encouraged by a separate section in the revised note on consultations with troop- and police- contributing countries, it is essential that the Council's effective partnership with TCCs be extended beyond the mere operational aspects of a mandate and include decision-making, policy formulation and mandate formation as well. The implementation of note S/2013/630 remains pertinent in this regard.

Together with the United Kingdom, my country led informal consultations by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping on triangular cooperation. The recommendations flowing from these consultations will now be considered during the upcoming meeting of the Special Committee, and we are confident that they will serve as a point of departure in our efforts to improve and strengthen existing triangular mechanisms.

Secondly, the Council should be more transparent and balanced in the working of its subsidiary organs. Elected members should have a more equitable representation on these organs. Additionally, they should also play a bigger role as penholders on issues on the Council's agenda.

In the same vein, and as other colleagues have also said this morning, there is no justification for limiting the scope of the Ombudsman to only one Sanctions Committee. The mandate of the Ombudsperson for the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities should be expanded to other committees.

Thirdly, we believe that the Council should rely more on the instrument of diplomacy and pacific settlement of disputes under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. Better utilization of regional and

subregional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter would surely help.

Increasing reliance on Chapter VII can lead to an impasse and at times a diminished focus on diplomacy, which is obviously not desirable. Before mandating actions under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should ensure that all recourse to peaceful means have been exhausted and that this remains a measure of last resort.

Fourthly, nothing undermines the credibility of the Council more than selective implementation of its own resolutions. The Council should therefore periodically review the implementation of its own resolutions, especially on long-standing issues such as the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Failure to enforce its own resolutions undercuts not just the Council's standing in the world but also both the image and standing of the United Nations.

During Pakistan's most recent term in the Council, which was just a few years ago, we reintroduced wrap-up sessions, which have now become the norm. Pakistan also made specific proposals on enhancing intra-Council communication and organized Arria Formula meetings. These steps were taken to augment openness and transparency in the Council's work.

We have not been alone in this endeavour. Over the years, elected members of the Council have led the charge in bringing improvements to its working methods. There is in fact an inextricable link between the nature of the membership of the Council and the need felt to make the Council more open and transparent. This link is called "accountability".

The best way to enhance the democratic and representative character of the Council is therefore to reinforce this norm of accountability and not to support any actions that threaten to undermine or reverse these ideals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Ms. Lind (Estonia): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate today. We also offer our warm thanks to Mr. Martin for his briefing and to him and his team for their dedication.

Estonia, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, fully endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Switzerland earlier today. Estonia, together with Costa Rica, has been at the forefront of the ACT group on the "T" — that is, transparency — issues. I would like therefore to emphasize a few points on this topic.

Estonia cannot speak from first-hand experience about the complicated daily work of the Security Council since we have never served as a Council member. But we truly believe in the positive impact of open and inclusive processes. Furthermore, and as was already expressed in the 2005 World Summit outcome document, the main goal should be increased ownership of the Council's work by all countries and its accountability to the membership.

We have closely seen the importance of effective and substantiated communication between the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership in the recent process of appointing the Secretary-General. In this regard, Estonia, acting on behalf of the ACT group, sent letters to the Secretary-General and to the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council on lessons learned. Our conclusions were recently published as document S/2017/846. Although there is still time until the peak of the next Secretary-General selection cycle, I would like to draw Council members' attention to a few suggestions from our "lessons learned" document for future reference.

First, the ACT group believes that the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly needs to be improved to live up to the expectations of the membership and the new standards of openness and transparency. In that regard, we encourage the Security Council to review its working methods, building on the discussions held among Council members during the latest selection. Secondly, the ACT group recalls the collective responsibility of the Security Council to reach consensus on a recommendation to the General Assembly for the appointment of the Secretary-General. In that connection, ACT believes the use of colour-coded ballots during straw polling should be discouraged and that the equal rights and role of all Council members in the process should be upheld. Last but not least, the ACT group calls for regular public briefings by the Security Council on developments in the nomination process and for open communication with regard to straw poll results.

Overall we are glad to witness that the members of the Security Council are more often speaking in the open

Chamber and contributing to increased transparency. We are fully aware that there are discussions and situations that need to be dealt with behind closed doors, but we encourage Council members to hold open meetings whenever possible and to seek interaction with the wider membership and other organs, as well as with civil society.

In closing, I would like to express our gratitude for the work done by Japan in the Informal Working Group and wish all the best to Kuwait for its chairmanship in the next two years.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate. We welcome every effort from the Security Council to push this agenda forward. I also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing.

In recent years, some steps were taken to increase the transparency, inclusiveness, interaction and efficiency of the work of the Security Council. In that regard, we commend the recent work by the members of the Council, under the leadership of Japan, in updating the presidential note S/2010/507. The challenge now lies in its implementation.

As yet another member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, we associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland. I would like now to briefly touch upon four aspects and suggest some concrete improvements.

The first aspect concerns open debates, which tend to be a regular feature of the Council's monthly programme of work. We welcome these debates as an expression of the commitment to greater transparency and openness to non-Council members. But open debates are also a way to enable Member States to better understand the measures adopted by the Council and to enhance their commitment to the full implementation of these measures. In this vein, we believe that whenever an open debate is expected to have an outcome, the Council should preferentially decide to allow at a later stage for the outcome to reflect the input of non-Council members, as deemed relevant by the Council.

With regard to the second aspect, we note with appreciation that an increasing number of Council members are expressing their views publicly at briefings. We welcome and encourage that good practice, as it contributes to increased transparency and allows members of the Council to have their views on record, without prejudice to informal consultations whenever the Council's members deem that appropriate.

Thirdly, we believe that the Security Council's consultation with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council increases the power of synergies and strengthens a more coordinated United Nations response in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The importance of such interactions has already been recognized by the Security Council. What is now required is to bring this approach into full practice. We therefore encourage the Council to regularly invite the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission and of its country configurations, as well as the President of the Economic and Social Council, as briefers or participants in informal dialogues, as necessary.

Fourthly, we encourage the Council to make better use of its subsidiary bodies, such as the sanctions committees and the working groups, to ensure that it captures early signs of emerging threats to peace and security, including those closely linked to the larger development agenda, climate change, pandemics, illegal trafficking or organized crime.

Mr. President, in the coming months, as you ably guide the Informal Working Group as its as Chair, we trust that the Council will agree on further progress related to its working methods, without overburdening the Council's workload.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and express our full confidence in your leadership to make it a successful month. I would also like to commend the delegation of Kazakhstan for a fruitful presidency in January. I would also like to thank Mr. Martin for his briefing.

When the 51 States that established the United Nations met in San Francisco in 1945 — and my country, Lebanon, was one of them — they determined on behalf of the international community to

> "unite their strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods,

that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest".

That was 73 years ago. While the principles endure, the methods and architecture are due for a twenty-first century update.

The security, economic, political and technological environment is completely different from that of the time of the founding of the Organization in the 1940s. The challenges facing the international community urgently point to the need to improve and reform the global governance mechanisms. Lebanon has constantly supported all endeavours aimed at reforming the United Nations and its main organs, whether the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council. But most importantly, Lebanon supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres, and will continue to engage constructively in his initiative to reform the Secretariat.

Lebanon is a firm believer in the need to enhance and strengthen the working methods of the Security Council, rendering it more transparent and efficient. To that end, my country has constantly supported the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and considers it a step in the right direction.

As underlined in the President's concept note (S/2018/66, annex) on the improvements in the Council's working methods over the last 25 years, there is a need to do more. Better communication and greater involvement of Member States, especially concerned countries, in the decision-making process on issues related to international peace and security remain the cornerstone of the priorities of these non-members of the Security Council. The noticeable improvement in the quantitative access to information should be coupled with a qualitative and participatory approach. This will be a solid path to ensure that the Security Council is more accessible, transparent and accountable, hence more democratic. Lebanon is fully confident that the Kuwaiti chairmanship of the Working Group will prove decisive and fruitful in that regard.

Lebanon believes that the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly should be more analytical, ask difficult questions, draw on lessons learned and call for common action. We look forward to seeing, in the coming report, the reasons behind the crippling effect of vetoes exercised last year on matters affecting peace and security and leading to further protracted conflict with massive human cost.

There is also a need for non-Council members to participate in the closed sessions of the Council when they are concerned. The Council should also devote more meetings and field visits for the prevention of conflict. The relationship between the Council and the General Assembly should not be considered only in the context of encroachment, but rather in the framework of shared responsibility in the widest interpretation of threats to international peace and security.

The prompt adoption of the Security Council's rules and procedures and the strengthening of coordination with other organs, mainly the General Assembly, remain key elements of a more effective Security Council — one that can meet the enormous challenges of the day.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our pride in Kuwait assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We unconditionally support Kuwait's efforts in that office

(*spoke in French*)

I thank the Kuwaiti presidency for having convened this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We particularly welcome the deserved institutionalization of this topic, to make it an annual consideration by the Council. This positive development allows us today to address such an important issue among members and non-members of the Council alike.

My delegation takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the outstanding work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the adoption, on 30 August 2017, of note S/2017/507, issued under the presidency of Egypt. This note, as updated, provides us a current, coherent and substantive document for reflection. We welcome the key role of Japan at the helm of the Working Group over the past two years. We are convinced that the Group will make significant progress under your chairmanship, Mr. President.

All of these elements, accompanied by ongoing and sustained efforts, will certainly advance our goal

of improving and harmonizing the activities of the Security Council by enshrining the role of the Council as guarantor of the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all Member States of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations has conferred on the Council important powers that it is duty-bound to use effectively. We commend the Council for efforts made to date, and we encourage further work in this area.

Indeed, the Council broke a record this past year with the holding of no less than 282 public meetings — that is, 41 more than in 2014 and 45 more than 2016. It is a testament to the growing responsibility of the Council. Nevertheless, the review of the working methods of the Council was only addressed twice in 2017, at the behest of the Ukranian and Egyptian presidencies in February and August, respectively. Five such meetings were held in 2016.

In that context, Morocco welcomes the many positive developments in recent years with regard to improving the Council's operations and bolstering its effectiveness and inclusiveness, including the issuing of joint letters from the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly to all Member States listing the names of candidates for the Secretary-General position; the openness and greater interaction with non-Council-member States; more systematic use of new technologies, notably videoconference; the election of chairs of the Council's subsidiary bodies that are more accessible to non-permanent members; and interactions with chairs of the country-specific configurations in the Peacebuilding Commission.

Those new practices contribute to enhancing the transparency and quality of the work of the Council and also allows it to benefit from the diversity of positions and views of Member States. It should be kept in mind that improving the working methods of the Council is a permanent and evolving process. The presidental note in S/2017/507 is a major feat in this quest for transparency, effectiveness and greater authority for the Council. In that regard, it is particularly important to take into account the current global international context in all discussions on the working methods of the Council.

Moreover, as a troop-contributing country, the Kingdom of Morocco can attest to the lasting effects of the Council efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, particularly in Africa. Morocco also attaches great importance to the development of preventive diplomacy, hand in hand with the need for rapid and effective action to maintain international peace and security and promote political solutions to conflicts, and to the development of the support that the international community extends to the actions taken by the Council. It goes without saying that improving the working methods of the Council through the joint reflection of all Member States, accompanied by the political will of the members of this executive organ of the United Nations, will contribute to the achievement of its goals.

Finally, we would do well to not forget that the debate on the improvement of the working methods of the Council is part of a united vision of the new architecture of the United Nations, as expressed by the Secretary-General in his reform proposals. The Kingdom of Morocco is ready to contribute to this important work, just as it did during the two years of its mandate in the Council, in 2012 and 2013.

I would be remiss if I did not pay a heartfelt tribute to the Security Council Affairs Division, which, through its reports, analyses and its accessibility to the Member States of the United Nations, contributes to the improvement of the Council's working methods.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Ms. Tang (Singapore): I take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council and to thank Kuwait for convening today's meeting.

I would also like to thank Japan for its efforts over the past two years in steering the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Under Japan's leadership, a major update of note S/2010/507 on the working methods of the Council was compiled and issued in August 2017 (see S/2017/507). Last week, we began a new round of intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. Today's open debate is therefore a timely occasion to reflect on progress made thus far and to identify what can still be improved.

To begin, we are pleased that there has been significant progress in transparency in recent years. The number of public meetings has increased steadily since 2013. The webcasting of meetings and media interactions have given greater visibility to the Council's work. More information is also now available

through the Council's website as well as social media. My delegation is also grateful to the members of the Council who have actively sought to engage and brief the wider membership on key issues of interest.

Steps have also been taken in recent years to improve inclusiveness. Singapore is encouraged that Council members have made greater use of different formats since 2015 to engage more interactively with the General Assembly, including informal briefings, Arria Formula meetings, Tokyo-format dialogues and so on. We also note the growing regularization of meetings by each month's President to introduce the new programme of work and wrap-up sessions to reflect on the work of the past month. Those are important opportunities for the Council to have exchanges with other Member States on its work.

In terms of effectiveness, the record has been mixed. There have been many occasions over the past three years where the Council has achieved unity on difficult subjects and found its voice in responding to critical developments. However, there have also been other occasions when the Council has not managed to reach consensus or take adequate action. Singapore's views on the use of the veto are well known, and I will not repeat them here. Instead, we ask the members of the Council, especially its permanent members, to reflect on their role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Robust debate must also be accompanied by a willingness to compromise in the search for solutions. Otherwise, this Chamber will amount to little more than a stage on which the Security Council postures, without meaningful impact on the ground.

These three principles are not mutually exclusive. They are a call for the Security Council to be more transparent, inclusive, and effective. Only then can the Council also be more accountable to the wider membership. In this regard, we think there are some practical steps that the Security Council can take.

First, as highlighted by Kuwait in its concept note for this open debate (S/2018/56, annex), more can be done to involve concerned States or regional bodies in issues and decisions that impact them. The Council has stepped up informal consultations with concerned States in recent years. We encourage the Council to reflect on regularizing this process where possible. The Council should also find ways to deepen its coordination with troop- and police-contributing countries. Our discussions on the evolution of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and the peace continuum continue to evolve, both within and outside this Chamber. The common anchor for all these discussions must be adequate consideration for the practical challenges of implementation on the ground, especially when decisions of the Council have far-reaching impact and the General Assembly is called upon to resource them.

Secondly, we encourage the Council to look seriously at ways to improve the implementation of sanctions. Australia, Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden made an important contribution to this process through the high-level review of United Nations sanctions in 2014. Last year, Egypt made another important contribution, convening several meetings on the practical challenges of sanctions implementation and capturing its reflections in document S/2017/1098. This is a concrete beginning that we should build on and the Council should find ways to continue working with the General Assembly to take this forward.

Thirdly, we urge the Council to continue reviewing and strengthening the role of elected members. The Council's membership is not perfect. Sixty-six States have never served on the Council, but the 10 elected members of the Council were chosen by their peers to represent their interests and concerns. A positive step was taken last year to invite newly elected members to observe meetings of the Council, subsidiary bodies and informal consultations for the three months immediately preceding their term of membership. More can be done to strengthen their voice and role on the Council, including through a review of the penholder system.

Finally, over the past year we have heard much about performance, benchmarks and indicators of achievement for the peacekeeping operations, special political missions, subsidiary bodies and other processes that are mandated by the Council. It is time for the Council to also account for its own performance and begin by adopting its own rules of procedure. They constitute the only official set of rules guiding the working methods of this important body, and yet remain provisional after 70 years. The General Assembly sought to ameliorate this situation somewhat in 1952, by mandating a repertoire of the practice of the Security Council. Sixty-six years on, the Council should do its part.

Singapore welcomes Kuwait's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. This open debate is a positive

beginning, and we look forward to continued and meaningful engagement between the Council and the General Assembly under Kuwait's leadership.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Morales López (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council, which is in and of itself a tangible demonstration of the commitment that the most important body in maintaining international peace and security should demonstrate to the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and efficiency. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing.

My country is convinced that this exercise is far from merely an administrative or technical one: this annual review of the progress and challenges in the working methods of the Security Council is no small matter insofar as the Council's ability to effectively carry out its work has a global impact beyond the walls of this Chamber. In this regard, we welcome the consistent work and receptive aptitude of its current and past members towards the concerns of the rest of the membership and the fact that they have incorporated practices, such as more active participation by non-members of the Council as co-penholders of resolutions, greater publicity of its meeting and instances of greater transparency with respect to the activities and documents of the Council, inter alia, which have democratized the Council's work and made it and its impact more efficient, as mentioned in the concept note by the presidency of Kuwait (S/2018/66, annex) and the note of the presidency of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507).

The institutional relationship and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, especially this year when we are seeking to adopt and implement the process of reforming the peace and security and development pillars of the Secretary-General, is undoubtedly an ongoing process that should be subject to ongoing review and improvements.

Improving transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness and accountability in the Council's working methods is essential to achieving a better alignment between the Security Council's decisions on peace and security and the support these decisions receive from all Member States, particularly those that are not part of the Council. The four elements mentioned are, in our view, essential to building a decision-making culture that is in line with our collective interests.

With regard to communications, Colombia recognizes the efforts made by the various presidents of the Security Council, especially the meetings with the President of the General Assembly and the organization of open and public briefings, which make the discussions on the most pressing problems and situations more democratic. Furthermore, with respect to documentation, we reiterate that it is essential that the annual reports submitted by the Council to the General Assembly have an appropriate level of specificity that contributes to a better understanding of the decision-making process for the general public and non-member delegations in order to ensure that they are genuinely informative and not merely descriptive.

Finally, I must refer to the role that the General Assembly's revitalization process has played within the United Nations in ensuring that the Organization can meet the huge challenges we place on its substantive agenda. Thanks to the decision of the President of the General Assembly, Colombia will have the opportunity to co-Chair, with Croatia, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. In the revitalization process, all Members of the United Nations have provided unanimous guidance on the way forward on the various issues that have modernized and made the United Nations more effective, based on the inclusive management of our discussions. Recent evidence of this could be seen in the process of selecting a Secretary-General, in the more equitable regional and gender representation among senior management, and in the greater efficiency and democracy of some processes within the Commissions, to mention just a few.

Therefore, I have no doubt that we have made significant progress, but we still have a long way to go to achieve our shared goal of a Security Council that is aligned with the objectives established in the Charter to work towards international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Allow me to make a few brief comments in addition to the statement of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, which was delivered earlier by the representative of Switzerland.

At a time when the world faces so many challenges — from the crisis on the Korean peninsula to the crises of the protection of civilians in Syria, Yemen and Myanmar, among others — the need for an effective Security Council is more obvious than ever. The centrality of the Council in a multilateral response to such crises cannot be overstated. Yet, time and again we have witnessed paralysis in the Council and its inability to carry out its functions effectively on behalf of the entire membership with a dramatic impact on international stability and enormous human suffering as a result.

In this context, the use of the veto has played a central and unfortunate role. In the recent past in particular, the veto has repeatedly been used in stark opposition to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, preventing the Council from fulfilling its tasks under the Charter. Examples range from a number of resolutions on Syria to the reaffirmation of relevant international law with respect to the situation in the Middle East. Indeed, permanent members should play a leading role in upholding the Council's decisions as they are binding on the entire membership in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter.

We all accepted the veto when joining the United Nations, and while many of us favour its abolition as a matter of principle, working on an understanding on its use is, to our mind, the more promising path. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group has developed a code of conduct regarding Security Council action against mass atrocity crimes, which includes a commitment not to vote against Council action to counter such crimes. To date, 114 States — large and small — from all regions of the world have subscribed to it, including two permanent members of the Council. Those States are also committed to timely and decisive Security Council action against the worst crimes under international law if and when they serve on the Council.

This year is the first time since the elaboration of the code of conduct that nine States that support it serve on the Council, which constitutes a procedural majority that could be of crucial importance for placing topics on the Council's agenda. We look forward to working with those States, in particular to ensure that the code of conduct can, over time, bring about a change in the political culture in the Council — a change that is very badly needed. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join the code of conduct as soon as possible. Liechtenstein, as a matter of policy, only supports Security Council candidatures from countries that have joined the code of conduct.

Along similar lines, the Council should act as an enforcer of accountability for the most serious crimes under international law. Accountability for atrocity crimes not only reduces impunity for such crimes, it also helps to prevent them in the future and thereby contributes directly to the maintenance of international peace and security. When possible, States in question should be offered assistance to ensure such accountability in their national systems, with the help of international components, when necessary.

But referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the Council are of course also critical when all other accountability options have failed. The Secretary-General recently renewed his calls on the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. We support that call. The work of the ICC, in that respect, could be greatly assisted by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, created by the General Assembly in 2016.

In December 2017, States parties to the Rome Statute added a new tool to the Council's toolbox by activating the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, which will go into effect as of 17 July 2018. That is a landmark development in the history of international law and complementary to the prohibition of the illegal use of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Council should therefore use its ICC referral powers with respect to the crime of aggression wisely, as it has the tremendous potential not only to hold leaders who decide to commit illegal acts of aggression accountable, but to deter illegal war-making in the first place.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): At the outset, allow me to thank the Kuwaiti presidency for organizing today's open debate on working methods, which offers us a public occasion to elaborate on the revised note by the President S/2017/507, push for its implementation and pay tribute to the remarkable progress made by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions under the Japanese chairmanship over the past two years.

The revised note 507 responds to the demand for enhanced transparency, inclusiveness and interaction of the Council with the rest of the United Nations membership. It reflects the improvements already achieved in recent years, as in the case of the new selection process for the Chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs. The measures introduced for the preparation of incoming elected members put them in a better position to contribute to the Council's work from day one, thereby enhancing its effectiveness. So much has been done. Let me mention, in that context, our split term with the Netherlands and the work carried out throughout the year with its team to ensure a smooth transition, in particular in the work of the subsidiary organs.

More can be done to achieve full implementation of note 507 and for a bold interpretation of its provisions. In our view, the role of the elected ten will be crucial in that respect. We encourage the Council to continue to make full use of all tools at its disposal, and wish to put forward the following considerations and suggestions. Italy believes in closer cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and is looking forward to seeing the Council regularly request, deliberate and draw upon the PBC's specific, strategic and targeted advice, as stated in paragraph 95 of note 507. Italy is aware of the responsibilities as a penholder. At the same time, we welcome co-penholdership as a practice that allows for the wider participation of Council members in the drafting process and can consequently bring added value to the Council's outcomes. During the drafting process, we encourage the Council to engage in timely consultations, including with the broader United Nations membership, in particular with interested States and regional organizations.

In that respect, in reviewing the mandates of peacekeeping operations, due consideration should be given to the views of the troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs). The inclusive involvement of TCCs and PCCs when renewing mandates is key to nurturing trust between those countries and Council members. During our term in the Council last year, we saw first-hand that much remains to be done in that respect. The Council should also promote and make more regular use of informal settings, such as informal awareness meetings to receive necessary information prior to deliberations. Italy is also in favour of inviting non-traditional briefers to Council meetings, in particular women from civil society, to allow Council members to hear other voices before deliberating.

Finally, we believe in an enhanced role of the Council presidency in framing the discussion in consultations and communicating outcomes to the press. Transparency is a very important tool for upholding the legitimacy of this organ's deliberations.

While we discuss working methods, we must not shy away from debating in the same terms the comprehensive reform of the Council, including its structure and composition. We must aim at a modern Council, which enjoys greater authority and legitimacy in tune with the democratic reality of the twenty-first century and in line with the principle of equal status for every State Member of the United Nations. We should then earnestly debate if an increased number of veto powers would make the Council more responsive to international crises, or more efficient, inclusive, accountable and transparent. That is an open question which, in our view, remains crucial in the current debate.

In conclusion, in that respect, Italy is ready to engage with the rest of the membership in a constructive dialogue leading to an early reform, through which elected members can make a greater contribution to the Council's work, as well as by acting as a bridge towards non-Council members, while reflecting their concerns and remaining fully accountable to the scrutiny of the wider membership. We remain committed in that endeavour.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is grateful to Kuwait for convening this debate and its work as a member of the Security Council. We also underline the role of Kazakhstan during the previous presidency, in particular the debate on the maintenance of international peace and security held on 19 January. We thank Japan for its efforts to update note S/2010/507. We welcome Mr. Ian Martin and commend him on the work conducted by Security Council Report on the Council's working methods. We agree with the vast majority of the recommendations that have been put forward today, and those included in recent and previous reports. A reference was made to Ambassador Colin Keating earlier today. I would like to highlight that he was one of the first to draw the Council's attention to the importance of working with the Peacebuilding Commission and troop-contributing

countries. Many have addressed that issue today. Therefore, we will address specific issues, in addition to those before us for consideration.

We need working methods that ensure that effective political attention is given to the work of the Council. We encourage Council members to demonstrate greater discipline and restraint with regard to the list of initiatives to be considered or adopted. Many of them take up precious time and hinder the adoption of solutions to the most urgent problems. Although the veto is not a working method per se, it has an adverse domino effect on the working methods of the Council, and of its subsidiary bodies, in particular the sanctions committees, as previous speakers have mentioned. Elected members are often excluded as a matter of custom. There should be a more inclusive process when drafting resolutions and presidential statements, and recommendations of the subsidiary bodies.

In that regard, we recommend the following measures. We must strengthen the role of the 10 elected members (E-10), as mentioned by the representative of the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency group, of which Chile is a member. They should be included as co-penholders, preferably in interegional groups, as was the case with resolution 2286 (2016), which was adopted in close consultation with civil society. We must encourage greater use of wrap-up meetings because they help the broader membership and the interested public to monitor accountability in the work of the Council, given the fact that they are public and broadcast in the six official languages.

A good example was the most recent wrap-up meeting, convened by Kazakhstan (see S/PV.8173), during which the African members of the E-10 spoke as one group to highlight their region's priorities. Speaking in one voice underscored the role of elected members in reducing the Council's workload. We also propose that greater use be made of open debates by selecting issues that require analysis from all members. In order to determine points of convergence, the proposal was made to encourage statements by like-minded groups and inter-regional groups, such as the Human Security Network, the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict and groups related to the women and peace and security agenda, which include non-governmental organizations, whose chairs can be consulted when preparing concept notes.

Similarly, we stress the importance of increasing the number of Arria Formula meetings by circulating a summary to all Member States on outcomes and recommendations. We propose that the work of the various subsidiary bodies be consolidated and that the reports of the groups of experts of sanctions committees be considered when structuring outcome documents, in particular, with regard to mission transfers. The transparency of the subsidiary bodies should be bolstered by an improved and more timely use of electronic media available. In that regard, we commend the sanctions committees on their efforts. We stress the importance of using press releases to highlight their work so that they can emerge from the subterranean universe mentioned by a previous speaker.

In conclusion, we highlight the importance of strengthening the role of the Office of the Ombudsperson and the prompt appointment of an ombudsperson to fill the post that has been vacant for some time.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. Hawke (New Zealand): I thank Kuwait for convening today's open debate and Ian Martin for his briefing.

We all have a stake in this issue because poor working methods can lead to poor outcomes. While we welcome note S/2017/507 as an important codification, it must be equally met with a change in Council culture. In that regard, I wish to make three points.

First, the Council's working methods should operate to empower elected members to be fully involved in collective decision-making. The legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council's decisions are maximized when it works as 15 rather than five. We welcome recent progress in ensuring that incoming elected members are better prepared for membership. However, they still face significant disadvantages. Important decisions are sometimes negotiated without them, leaving elected members presented with last-minute take-it-or-leave-it proposals with no realistic opportunity to participate.

So-called penholdership can become distorted to exclude meaningful input from elected members. At the same time, elected members should themselves be ambitious and enact the change in behaviour they wish to see in the Council. We encourage greater consideration as to whether any issues faced by the Council would benefit from elected members working

more closely. For New Zealand, one such example was working with four other elected Council members to draft and secure the unanimous adoption of resolution 2286 (2016) on health care and armed conflict. There are many other such examples to look to for inspiration.

Secondly, the Council's working methods should operate to enable meaningful engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries. It is a problem that can be addressed at least in part by taking simple practical steps. During our Council term, we initiated informal triangular consultations among the Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries. Informality does not come naturally to the United Nations but our aim was to create space for a more fluid and timely exchange of information and perspectives. We welcome the Council's pledge in revised note 507 to continue and develop informal consultations and we look forward to them becoming more regularized.

Thirdly, the Council's working methods should operate to strengthen its capacity to prevent conflict. For the Council to act early and prevent conflict, all Council members must be well informed of developments and potential threats to peace and security. The key is strengthening the Council's situational awareness. Where issues are fast-moving, with competing accounts on the ground, the Secretariat can play an important role in providing authoritative information to Council members.

For the Council's own legitimacy and effectiveness, it is in all our interests that its culture and behaviour reinforce that.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Since this is Ukraine's first statement in the Chamber after we completed our two-year term as an elected member of the Security Council, I would like to take this opportunity to extend sincere congratulations to the six new members of the Council on a successful start to their work.

I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, and wish you good luck in your presidency. We thank you for convening today's debate on such an important subject — the Council's working methods. The last time that the United Nations membership had a chance to engage in such a discussion was in July 2016 (see S/PV.7740). We are also grateful to Mr. Martin for his outstanding briefing today.

I would like to pay tribute to the dedication and hard work of the Japanese delegation, which steered negotiations on updating presidential note S/2010/507 and on drafting presidential note S/2016/619, regarding the selection of Chairs of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies. The new document S/2017/507 is a significant achievement, aimed at further streamlining the Council's practices. We are also pleased that several of Ukraine's priorities are reflected in it, including those on making the Council's field visits more transparent. What is required now is meaningful follow-up, in particular the proper implementation of the relevant provisions for the organization of visits, as well as due preparation of reports following their conclusion.

Ukraine has always been among the proponents of a more transparent Council. Over the past two years, we did our best to contribute to further opening up this body's activities to the outside world and to enhancing the role of elected members. We conducted our presidency exactly one year ago in that spirit of openness to dialogue and accessibility for all United Nations Member States. We clearly supported convening open Council meetings whenever possible. We underscored that closed consultations should be the exception rather than the rule. We proceeded from the understanding that if consultations are held, the outside world deserves to know what was discussed. We therefore endeavoured to summarize the respective discussions for further presentation at the media stakeout. It is encouraging to see that that trend of greater openness is receiving increasing support among Council members.

We approached our duties as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, in the same way. We invited civil society representatives to informal briefings. We convened Committee meetings with the participation of regional States. My delegation also initiated joint informal consultations with other committees to ensure a holistic approach to addressing issues such as the cross-border spread of armed groups and illegal arms transfers.

We also remain staunch supporters of the practice of formal monthly wrap-up sessions, which we see as an important element of the proper implementation

of presidential note 507. We therefore introduced the practice of seeking the input of Member States on issues which they would like Council members to consider. In the same vein, we are convinced that the timely issuance of monthly assessments is not something to be overlooked, since such assessments constitute a valuable source for preparing annual reports.

All of this means that the working methods of the Council are what Council members do every day. Nothing is set in stone and positive change is possible and is taking place, even if at a slower rate than desired.

We all have seen the Council's successful political intervention in the post-conflict electoral crisis in The Gambia. That achievement testifies to the Council's potential in the area of conflict prevention. We hope that preventive diplomacy will gradually become one of standard marks of the Council's work.

Currently, the question of the use of the veto remains one of the most divisive issues. Ukraine belongs to the group of States that support both the code of conduct regarding Security Council action in response to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes and the French-Mexican initiative on suspending the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

While we are fully aware that a Council without the veto is, unfortunately, a distant and uncertain reality, we believe that responsible members of the international community should be able to pledge not to resort to the veto when considering cases that have all the hallmarks of crimes against humanity and mass atrocities. Yet the past few years will be recorded in history as the time when repeated vetoes, primarily by Russia, stained the Council's reputation to a point almost beyond repair.

However, it is never too late to stop abusing the veto right. Fully aware of the value of short statements, I will conclude with a remark that any effort to increase the openness and transparency of the Council will be warmly welcomed and strongly supported by the wider United Nations membership, including Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate Kuwait on iits initiative to convene this open debate. It is an important topic, which is dear to us. Moreover, Belgium had the honour of presiding over one of the first open debates on this issue 10 years ago (see S/PV.5968).

The review of working methods should take place in the broader context of the cross-cutting considerations that the United Nations is currently undertaking. I am thinking of the Secretary-General's reforms and the concept of sustainable peace, which call on us to address the root causes of conflict. The Security Council cannot function in a vacuum but must act consistently in line with the work of the United Nations and of the region. That is a guarantee of legitimacy for the Council, which is expected to work in the interests of international security.

Of course, Belgium does not wish to overhaul the institutional architecture of the United Nations nor do we wish to burden the Council with tasks or missions that duplicate those entrusted to other bodies. We simply want the Council to benefit from all the dynamism, observations and information generated by the United Nations system as a whole in order to improve its effectiveness and the relevance of its action. Coordination, common understanding and partnerships are the triptych that we would like to see take shape. Allow me, inter alia, to put forward some ideas.

First and foremost, with regard to the relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, we encourage all initiatives to galvanize that relationship. The activities of the Commission should contribute to enriching the Council's discussions, which requires well-coordinated programmes of work. That is true not only for meetings of country-specific configurations but also for meetings devited to a region or a topic. The discussions on the strategy for the Sahel are a good example in that regard. In addition, the Council could invite the Chair of a country-specific configuration of the Commission to participate in closed consultations, for example, following a visit by the Commission to the country concerned.

Secondly, with regard to regional partnerships, I believe that the Council would only benefit from strengthening its exchanges with all relevant stakeholders in a crisis or conflict situation. I am thinking primarily about regional actors. The special envoys of a regional organization involved in a peace process should be almost automatically invited to Council debates, whether open or closed. That, of course, goes both ways: clearly, United Nations envoys could also contribute to deliberations at the regional level. Moreover, we support the opening up of the Council to speakers who alert us to mass atrocities, such

as the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect.

Within the Council, it is necessary to continue to consider how to further promote cooperation on the penholder role. For example, it goes without saying that elected members from a region affected by a crisis or with a specific expertise have an increased role to play.

I also welcome the progress made with respect to the involvement of troop- and police-contributing countries in Council debates. The practice of tripartite dialogues among troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat must continue, both formally and informally. We believe that this dialogue needs to be further strengthened in terms of the preparation of meetings, the degree of interaction among participants and transparency of expected outcomes.

Finally, I wish to stress the importance of respecting procedural guarantees in the context of the implementation of the various sanctions regimes. Concrete measures have already been proposed by the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions, of which Belgium is an active member. Progress remains to be made and we will continue to lend our attention. In the short-term, I call on the Security Council to appoint a new Ombudsperson as soon as possible to assist the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, with respect to delisting requests. It is an important post and has been vacant since last year.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): We congratulate Kuwait on assuming the presidency and convening this important open debate. Since the Security Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations, it should understand and respond to their concerns on Council transparency, efficiency and accessibility. In this positive endeavour, the Council should not lose sight of the basic reality that working methods are not an end but a means to an end, where there must be an effective and equitable resolution of conflicts, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international law.

The working methods of the Security Council are crucial to its ability to fulfil its responsibility to act promptly and effectively on behalf of international peace and security. Over the past decade, the Security Council has made further progress in codifying and improving its working methods. Indonesia welcomes those steps, such as more open debates, increased consultations with the Presidents of principal organs and suborgans and voices from regional and multilateral organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to enrich Council discourse.

We would also like to commend Japan for its work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions in 2016 and 2017, particularly on improving transitional arrangements for newly elected Council members, and, of course, the update of note S/2010/507. That note is not only actively used by Security Council members, it is also an important aid for the non-permanent members preparing to work in the Council. To help bolster the Council's work, Indonesia emphasizes the following.

First, the Council should not mirror power statuses, but stand up credibly for the weak and powerless. On far too many occasions, the Council has been impeded by veto in the face of mass atrocities and severe violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. While Indonesia calls for the abolishment of veto rights, considering present entrenched realities, it encourages the Council to consider proposals, such as those presented by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and the French-Mexican initiative. The regulation of veto use would, first and foremost, be a great push to elevate Council effectiveness and global credibility. Issues of human rights and humanity, as in the case of mass atrocities that are vetoed for narrow political raisons d'etre, are issues that affect the existence of the Security Council in the eyes of many of our stakeholders. Until veto regulation is realized, we support a formal explanation of veto use by the permanent five being circulated to all General Assembly members.

Secondly, a key factor behind sustaining peace and ensuring that concrete ground results are achieved posterior to the restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar are the Council consultations, cooperation and support vis-à-vis stakeholders of United Nations special political missions, peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding. Since United Nations peacekeeping is indispensable, Indonesia urges the Council to regularly and meaningfully consult with

troop- and police-contributing countries throughout the different mission stages and strategy-making.

Indonesia, which has been involved in United Nations peacekeeping for 60 years and as its ninth-largest troop- and police-contributing country, believes that at no stage have there been efforts to institutionalize consultations among the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. Such consultations are an improvement that many have asked for in various forums, but remain to be implemented years after their necessity. That would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and raise more support from countries that have contributed to sending their troops to conflict areas, since they have a sense of belonging and involvement in the process. As we are sending our boys and girls in harm's way, troop- and police-contributing countries must be involved in decision-making related to predeployment, deployment and mandate changes.

Furthermore, the Peacebuilding Commission, now in existence for more than a decade, has acquired valuable expertise not just on specific country situations but on many vital themes, such as financing for peacebuilding, private-sector partnerships and illicit financial flows. Greater drawing by the Council on the Peacebuilding Commission's expertise, as well as improved collaboration with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, particularly as conflicts become more complex and multidimensional, will only enable the Council to develop more comprehensive solutions. Synergized responses will also enhance wider ownership in Council decisions.

Thirdly, reiterating inclusivity and meaningful consultations, Indonesia stresses the implementation of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter by fully taking into account the views of affected non-member countries. Since regional countries have critical bearing in various ongoing conflicts, their input and support, along with that of regional organizations, could be harnessed better by the Council.

In conclusion, Indonesia, once again, underscores that by building on the faithful implementation of note 507 and the various views expressed by the wider membership of today, it is hoped that the Security Council would enhance its inclusivity and promote more substantive participation by non-permanent Council members, as well as members not in the Council. The world outside this room is awaiting with keen interest and expectations for the Council to act justly and decisively, implement various decisions and live up to the Charter promise. The Council must keep the trust reposed in it so as to gain credibility and continue to exist as a beacon for peace and humankind. Transparency and trust are the key.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*) I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): I thank the Kuwaiti presidency for organizing this open debate. We appreciate the Kuwaiti delegation's commitment to inclusively discharging its functions as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. We recall the work accomplished by the delegation of Japan in its recently concluded tenure as the Chair of the Informal Working Group. We thank Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of Security Council Report, for sharing his insights this morning.

My delegation finds itself in a position in which we can align ourselves with the pertinent points made by all non-Council members so far.

We take this opportunity to share some observations in the light of our recent engagements with the Council in the aftermath of the atrocity crimes reported in Myanmar's Rakhine state since 25 August 2017 and the resulting forced exodus to date of nearly 688,000 people, mostly Rohingya, into Bangladesh. At a time when the Council members were still figuring out how to respond to the unfolding humanitarian crisis, the Secretary-General rose to the occasion by exercising his authority under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations to sensitize the Council about the potential threats posed by the crisis to international peace and security. We urge that this practice be encouraged on a more regular basis, as warranted by any humanitarian exigency likely to be compromised by otherwise political considerations.

The Council, on its part, had convened a number of consultations on the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, which resulted in the adoption of a fairly comprehensive presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/22). Given the unfolding nature of the crisis, it is to be expected that the Council remain seized with the issue, and that it implement a periodic schedule to monitor the presidential statement's implementation by all the parties concerned. Regular briefings and consultations on such pressing issues would only further enhance the Council's credibility and minimize the possibility of

relying on the discretion of one Council member or the other. In that context, we put on record our appreciation for the Kuwaiti presidency for remaining seized with the possibility of reconvening an open meeting on the subject, since the last one was held nearly three months ago (see S/PV.8133).

In the same vein, we deem it appropriate for Council members to consider undertaking a visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh to reaffirm their support to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons, who have a rather uncertain future still awaiting them. The Council's visits on the ground are indeed a useful exercise, and we would wish to see the visits organized in a way that responds to the most urgent conflict and humanitarian situations under its consideration.

The Council has so far found it difficult to adopt a draft resolution on the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, mostly due to the possibility of the exercise of the veto against any such draft resolution. We acknowledge the veto as a responsibility and remain mindful of its varied use throughout United Nations history, with mixed results. However, we are increasingly convinced that the exercise of the veto should be avoided in cases that involve mass atrocity crimes.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretary General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict have, among others, unequivocally referred to the reported commission of atrocity crimes against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine state since 25 August 2017. Further facts attesting to the commission of such crimes are also coming to light. Against that backdrop, it is expected that the Council demonstrate pragmatism by working on a draft resolution that charts a durable solution package for the Rohingya.

In relation to the reported atrocity crimes, it is expected that the Council particularly consider decisive action by demanding accountability, in order to heal the trauma suffered by the Rohingya and restore their confidence in the possibility of a safe, dignified and voluntary return to Myanmar. In that context, as a State party to the Rome Statute, Bangladesh would particularly stress the importance of addressing the critical question of resources in cases referred to the International Criminal Court by the Council.

Much has been said about the need for streamlining the work of the various Council sanctions committees, especially in terms of making their decision-making processes more transparent and consultative for non-Council members. In relation to the latest Rohingya humanitarian crisis, we will particularly remain attuned to the Council's actions on possible sanctions, as recommended by different mandate holders. We would also wish to see information shared in a transparent manner on actions taken against Member States that have reportedly violated the Council's own sanctions regime, particularly in cases of arms transfers.

To conclude, we would urge the Council to give due recognition and space to the voices of victims by allowing the representatives of the Rohingya to come and share their narratives with the Council. One clear facet of the much anticipated reform of the Security Council must be to further enhance its human face and interactions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the delegation of Kuwait for convening this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for the concept note (S/2018/66, annex) circulated to that end. We trust that our deliberations will allow us to not only renew our commitment to continue our advances in improving the efficiency, transparency and interactivity of the Security Council, but will also serve as a solid basis for the effective implementation of presidential note S/2017/507, to which our delegation attaches great value and importance.

Guatemala acknowledges the progress made in some practices and the reinforcement of other measures included in note S/2017/507, thanks to the commendable work carried out by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which was most recently chaired by the delegation of Japan. Codifying best practices is an infinite task; at the same time, it is an extremely useful exercise for the work of this organ. Also taking into account our own experience as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2012-2013, we believe that there is always room for improvement. In that regard, we wish to highlight three issues that are currently relevant to the working methods of the Security Council.

First, searching for information and understanding regarding the activities of the Council remains a fundamental and legitimate request. Although there has been an increase in the Council's public meetings, continuing the practice of open debates that promote greater participation of non-members of the Council and the holding of numerous Arria Formula meetings in recent years has allowed the Council to obtain accurate information that helps it to effectively fulfil its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

We regret the increasingly irregular wrap-up sessions and the lack of regular contact with the Peacebuilding Commission — the Council's advisory body that plays an important role in preventing the recurrence of conflicts — and the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations, as well as with other United Nations bodies. Nevertheless, we commend the fact that note S/2017/507 conveys the importance of maintaining communication with the Peacebuilding Commission, in its capacity as an intergovernmental advisory body, and its configurations. Evidently, that would make it possible to obtain reliable, first-hand information and specific advice on the Commission's country configurations. In addition, such communication would also generate efficiency in the approach to conflict prevention and in maintaining appropriate guidance in implementing the concept of sustainable peace.

Secondly, in the past, the Council has taken decisions on appointing the Chairs of its subsidiary bodies in a balanced, transparent and inclusive manner, which allowed for change; that leads us to believe that consultations are held around the process, especially among the newly elected members of the Council. My delegation hopes that such a practice and trend will be reinforced in the future. It is also necessary to ensure that the selection and appointment processes for the various groups of experts are more transparent and balanced, in order to create broad geographic and gender representation, while also bearing in mind the guidance given in presidential note S/2006/997 and the provisions of note S/2017/507, which indicates that the appointment of subsidiary body Chairs must be agreed upon by 1 October of each year.

Thirdly, Guatemala values the information in section VIII of the annex of note S/2017/507, as it shows the importance of holding consultations among the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries, which constitutes a considerable contribution to increasing the Security Council's ability to take appropriate, effective and timely decisions in fulfilling its responsibilities. Such coordination is of great importance when peacekeeping operations transition to special political missions and in the eventual modification of their mandates.

In conclusion, our delegation appreciates the work to update the Security Council's working methods — a stance we have firmly held in past years regarding the issue. We welcome the progress made over the past two years and are pleased to note that the State of Kuwait has taken over the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on this subject for 2018-2019. Past practice indicates that elected members, which are accountable to regional groups and all Member States, tend to improve their working methods. The best way to highlight the representative and democratic nature of the Council is to strengthen its rules of accountability and transparency. That, in addition to cooperating with the permanent members, would lead to greater synergy in the Council around our common goal of improving its working methods, since Security Council decisions impact on the membership of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan .

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to commend your delegation, Mr. President, for holding this important open debate and for submitting a concept note (S/2018/66, annex) on the topic. I also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his insightful briefing.

We congratulate the State of Kuwait on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February and the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I would also like to praise the contributions made by the former Chairs of the Working Group. We acknowledge the role that the Group is playing by advancing ways to further enhance the transparency, accountability and overall efficiency of the Council's work. As an elected member of the Security Council, Azerbaijan actively participated in discussions within the Working Group and, during its presidency of the Council, held an open debate on the Council's working methods in October 2013 (see S/PV.7052).

The Security Council's working methods continue to raise great interest among the broader membership. Such an interest arises from the threats and challenges

facing the world nowadays and the functions of the Security Council, which acts on behalf of Member States and on which Member States conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. Today's open debate is yet another illustration of the high level of attention given to the topic.

We welcome the adoption by the Security Council, on 30 August 2017, of presidential note S/2017/507, which incorporates and further develops the Council's previous documents concerning its working methods. However, there is a need for more efforts in that direction, including through the Informal Working Group and annual open debates on working methods. I would like to focus briefly on three points.

First, it is clear that unity among the permanent members is an absolute necessity for reaching agreements. At the same time, it is important to always remember that both permanent and elected members of the Security Council bear a collective responsibility for international peace and security. We note the progress achieved so far in making the Council a more collaborative and inclusive organ and would welcome further deliberations and contributions to that end.

Secondly, the broader United Nations membership should be given more opportunities to be heard. We take positive note of some developments in that respect and look forward to additional efforts to enhance the transparency of the Security Council and its interaction with the wider membership.

Thirdly, needless to say, the effectiveness and accountable functioning of the Security Council require, first and foremost, the implementation of its decisions. The fact that the unlawful use of force against sovereign States and the resulting military occupation of their territories continue notwithstanding Security Council resolutions, including those referring to regional arrangements, does not mean that such a state of affairs can constitute an accepted practice of the Council's working methods.

The objective of maintaining international peace and security is hardly achievable if the universally recognized fundamental values, norms and principles are overtly disregarded, misinterpreted or conditioned by aggressors to whitewash their illegal actions. At a time of increased brutality of armed conflicts, challenges to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the highest level of forced displacement and growing terrorist and separatist threats, more concerted actions and synergy are required at all levels to safeguard international peace and security.

We look forward to the full implementation of presidential note 507 and a continued improvement in the working methods and regular practices of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Security Council this month, and to assure you that we are proud of the distinguished role that the sisterly State of Kuwait is playing in this forum. We thank you also for convening this open debate on the working methods of the Council.

We are in general agreement with the elements of the concept note (S/2018/66, annex), which was carefully prepared by the Kuwaiti presidency. We also value Kuwait's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, in its capacity as the coordinator of the Group of Arab States on Security Council reform.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, we align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the group.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is at the forefront of those countries urgently calling for a reform of the Security Council, including developing its working methods. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the efforts of the Arab Group on the reform of the Council, and we demand that the Arab countries be granted permanent representation, with full functions and powers, in any future reform of the Council. We also demand proportionate Arab representation in the non-permanent category.

We live in a world that is torn apart by war and escalating violence. We are in dire need of a Council that is able to shoulder its main responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security and defending international legitimacy. Reforming the Security Council started in 1993. Many reports and statements are available on the development of the Council's working methods, including increasing complementarity among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council. Those efforts have led to concrete steps towards increasing transparency, efficiency and wider participation. However, to date, we have not been able to reach practical and comprehensive solutions that would enable the Council to shoulder its main responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security and rising to the occasion, in order to meet the aspirations of the international community.

In fact, most Member States agree that part of the work of the Council is ineffective, which undermines its credibility and limits its ability to play an active role in settling conflicts. That is evident in the impasse among Council members on many issues, including the question of Palestine and the crisis in Syria.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appreciates the efforts made to improve and reform the working methods of the Security Council and to implement presidential note S/2017/507, which codifies and explains its working methods. In that regard, we would like to point to a number of factors pertaining to this issue.

First, elected Security Council members must fully participate in the work of the Council, including the preparation and submission of draft resolutions; secondly, a code of conduct must be adopetd that requires all Council members to refrain from obstructing draft resolutions aimed at ending genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes; thirdly, there must be consultations with the troop- and police-contributing countries; fourthly, on the work of the sanctions committees, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia values the establishment of an Ombudsman post for the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. We call for that vacancy to be filled as soon as possible.

I wish to assure the Council that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will continue to call for broad and comprehensive reform of the Council, and we call on the membership to creatively interact with proposed ideas and contribute to finding mechanisms that would enable the Council to shoulder its responsibility in maintaining peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Yardley (Australia): The scale and pace of challenges facing the Security Council today must bolster our resolve to ensure that the Council is as agile and effective as possible. Australia welcomes the update to note by the President S/2010/507. We thank Japan, which acted as Chair of the Informal Working Group during its recent Council term in 2016-2017, for its leadership and commitment on this issue. Australia likewise commends Kuwait for assuming the Chair in 2018 and for convening today's debate. I will focus on three key areas of working methods reform — transparency, sanctions and use of the veto.

First, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, Australia firmly believes transparency is an important element of the Council's effectiveness. In line with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines the responsibility of the Security Council to act on behalf of the whole membership, Council members should engage regularly with the broader membership through briefings, including with regional groups and outreach to affected countries. We also support greater use of public meetings, open debates, Arria Formula meetings and monthly wrap-up sessions.

Secondly, much of the Council's work relies on non-members to implement its decisions. It is therefore imperative that the broader membership be engaged appropriately in Council deliberations. One clear example is in the field of sanctions. We need to continue improving the working methods of the sanctions committees to enable better implementation of sanctions measures. Australia was proud to collaborate with Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden in launching, in November 2015, the *Compendium of the High-Level Review of United Nations Sanctions* and, in October last year, its follow-up *Assessment Report*. We are pleased that many of the Compendium's 150 recommendations are now being implemented. But more can be done. Last year's *Assessment Report* offers further ways in which cooperation, collaboration, transparency and capacity-building on sanctions issues can be enhanced. Both the compendium and the assessment represent sizable contributions towards building a better United Nations sanctions system and are essential tools for reforming Council working methods.

Finally, we must move urgently, decisively and in unison to agree on clear restraint of the veto. Too often, the Council has failed in its mandate because narrow interests have been allowed to prevail over those of the

most vulnerable. We note with concern the observation by Mr. Martin that 2017 saw the highest number of vetoes in two decades, which can impede decisive action in response to egregious crimes. We therefore join others in calling on all Council members — current and incoming — to commit unambiguously to the ACT code of conduct and the complementary French-Mexican initiative on restraining the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocity. Australia also encourages the Secretary-General to make full use of his prerogative under Article 99 of the Charter to bring to the Council's attention any matter that may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

As we continue to grapple with the multiple, overlapping challenges of terrorism, instability, conflict and fragility, working methods reform is not just a bureaucratic exercise. It is critical to the ability of the Council to discharge its core mandate — and to the lives that depend upon it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on the working methods of the Security Council.

Finland also commends the valuable contributions of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, and we align ourselves with the group's statement made earlier by the representative of Switzerland.

We would also like to thank Mr. Ian Martin for his briefing and acknowledge Security Council Report as an institution that has provided significant data on the Security Council — a recent example being the report on working methods published last month.

We commend the work of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and hope to see further progress under Kuwait's presidency of the Council. In that regard, we should build upon the work of Japan that resulted in the revised note by the President S/2017/507.

The preparation of newly elected members to serve on the Council is one important aspect also considered in note 507. We believe that it is essential to support incoming members in preparing for their tenure in a comprehensive and effective manner. Finland, in close cooperation with Professor Edward Luck of Columbia University, and other partners, such as the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, has for the past 15 years supported the preparation of non-permanent members to the work and practices of the Council by hosting an annual workshop. The Hitting the Ground Running retreat has also earned its place as a central forum for informal discussions, specifically on the Council's working methods. In addition to encouraging earlier elections and introducing more informal meeting formats, important discussions on co-penholdership and elections of Chairs of subsidiary bodies have also been taken forward at the retreat. Finland stands ready to continue and further develop this well-established practice in future.

We support increased interaction and cooperation between the Council and non-Council member States as well as United Nations actors, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. We welcome inviting non-governmental organizations as briefers. Holding informal briefings for all Member States on the programme of work by the President of the Council also increases the flow of information. Open debates, informal interactive dialogues and Arria Formula meetings can be useful forums as well.

Increased interaction within the Council is important. All members should be given an equal chance to participate in the work of the Council. How to further develop the concept of the penholder and co-penholder is important.

In conclusion, Finland is a member of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions, and was also one of the sponsors of the high-level review of United Nations sanctions. We continue to seek to improve due-process guarantees with regard to Security Council sanctions and to support efforts by the Council to enhance the fairness and transparency of its sanctions regimes. Fair and clear procedures make United Nations sanctions regimes more effective and credible. The establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson for the Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions regime was a considerable achievement. It is worrisome that the post of the Ombudsperson has been vacant since August. We therefore urge the Security Council to complete the appointment procedure without delay.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Chandrtri (Thailand): Allow me briefly to congratulate Kuwait for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I would

also like to express my appreciation to the Kuwaiti presidency for convening today's open debate on the Council's working methods under the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)".

The items on the Security Council's agenda are increasing in number, complexity and sensitivity. They require the Council to be ever more effective and efficient. The working methods of the Security Council therefore require constant review, so as to enable the Council to adapt and better fulfil its obligations in maintaining international peace and security. Many of the proposals and points raised by previous speakers have merit and enrich our discussions today. We would like to draw the attention of the Council to two areas we believe would benefit greatly from our combined focus on improvement.

First, Security Council sanctions remain an indispensable tool for global collective action in maintaining international peace and security. We firmly believe that any such sanctions, when imposed, should continue to be targeted in order to minimize unintended economic and social consequences. Furthermore, sanctions achieve their intended goals when Member States implement them fully and effectively. As such, Member States rely heavily on clarity of measures and definitions of scope.

In that respect, we welcome the inclusion of the harmonized system codes for prohibited items in the latest sanctions resolutions, and hope that will continue to be the practice in the future. We also welcome ongoing coordination efforts between sanctions committees and the practice of updating the consolidated sanctions lists. The relevant sanctions committees should be further encouraged to assist Member States by consolidating and regularly updating lists of all prohibited items, again with specific harmonized system codes and lists of all sanctions measures, especially on the inspection of cargo and means of transportation. Such consolidated lists will serve as useful implementation guidelines for national undertakings and enhance collaboration across Security Council mechanisms.

Secondly, Thailand urges members of the Council to continue convening public meetings and engaging the wider membership of the United Nations, particularly on issues with broader impacts and complexity. That will ensure a healthy exchange of ideas and lead to a thorough understanding of how the Council's decision, or inaction, will impact people on the ground. It will also go a long way in ensuring that the Council is held to the highest standards of transparency in its deliberations on matters that, essentially, have a much larger and more far-reaching impact than the current membership of the Council. In the same vein, Council members should share information, developments and outcomes with the wider membership of the United Nations, the public, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as appropriate, through frequent debriefing sessions. That will help to promote understanding and support for the work of the Council.

In conclusion, I would like to remind ourselves that the issue of the working methods of the Security Council should not be limited to issues particular to the Security Council. It is also important to understand that improving the Council's efficiency should be viewed within the context of a whole-of-system approach, in support of the mission of the entire United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba supports a genuine and thorough reform of the Security Council that will make it an effective, transparent representative and democratic organ that reflects the evolution of the United Nations and international relations. We welcome the Security Council's adoption of note by the President S/2017/507, which sets out and consolidates all the presidential notes on the working methods of the Council. Nevertheless, additional efforts are required without delay to move towards the democratization of the Security Council, both in its membership and its working methods, so as not to jeopardize the credibility of the United Nations and its long-term legitimacy.

Although we recognize the increase in recent years in the number of open debates, informative meetings, monthly wrap-up sessions and the unprecedented process of consultations and exchange of views with Member States for the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, we still see a continuation in the trend in the Council to work mainly in closed formats and to take decisions without addressing the concerns of non-permanent members and the other Members of the United Nations.

We need effective formulas to do away with exclusive practices and to ensure that there is genuine participation and democratization of the work and

decision-making of the Council. It bears noting that, in line with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, its Members recognize that the Security Council, in the discharge of its functions, acts on behalf of Member States, and therefore the work of the Council is a shared responsibility borne by all Member States.

Cuba reiterates the need for the Council to adopt a definitive text that regulates its work and thereby puts an end to the provisional nature that has characterized its rules of procedure for more than 70 years. That is indispensable in terms of transparency and the need for accountability.

We note with regret that the Council continues to present to the General Assembly annual reports that are merely a descriptive overview of its meetings, activities and decisions, instead of reflecting an explanatory, exhaustive and analytical content that focuses on the work of the Council and enables us to assess the reasons behind and implications of the Council's decisions. It is regrettable that the Security Council continues its work without presenting special reports on measures for maintaining international peace and security for consideration by the General Assembly, as requested by the Charter in Articles 15 and 24.

With regard to the veto, which is closely linked to the working methods of the Council, we reiterate that this is an anachronistic and anti-democratic privilege, which must be eliminated as soon as possible.

In addition to a change in its working methods, the Security Council must align its functions with the mandate entrusted to it in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, Cuba is very concerned about the trend in the Security Council to take up issues that do not pose an immediate threat to international peace and security and to take up functions beyond its remit, thereby increasingly usurping the role assigned by the Charter to other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly.

The selective manipulation in its operational practices, attempts to introduce issues that are not under the agenda of the Council and the politicization of specific issues in terms of particular interests of domination and hegemony must cease and be vigorously rejected.

No genuine reform of the United Nations is possible until the Security Council is reformed. Only in that way will we preserve multilateralism and be able to count on a reformed, democratic, transparent and efficient Security Council — one that represents the interests of all the States Members of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela commends the State of Kuwait for presiding over the Security Council in the month of February and thanks Kuwait for convening this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council.

We welcome the efforts that have been made so far for more than two decades to make improvements to the working methods of the Council, including presidential statement S/PRST/2015/19, which establishes the practice of holding an annual exchange of views on working methods.

Our country believes that there has been progress in improving the working methods of the Security Council, such as the participation of elected members in Council activities three months prior to the assumption of their responsibilities so that they can witness, at first hand, the daily activity of this organ with a view to assuming their responsibilities in the exercise of their mandates.

The inclusive appointment of the Chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs is a positive aspect in the evolution of the working methods. The process was finalized in 2017, when it was agreed that the process of appointing the representatives in charge of such bodies would be facilitated by two member countries of the Council, with the full cooperation of the rest of the membership. Undoubtedly, that rule has meant an improvement over the scheme that prevailed until 2016.

Although the working methods of the Security Council have improved, it is worth noting that there are still practices that affect its efficiency and effectiveness in addressing matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Venezuela is baffled at objections to the holding of public discussions on issues that are under the Council's agenda or objections to the participation of key regional organizations in the resolution of protracted conflicts. Such a state of affairs in no way contributes to the needed confidence-building among parties if they are to reach a peaceful resolution to their conflict. We call for public meetings to be the rule and not the exception.

Although closed consultations are a useful space for frank discussion, they must not be used to minimize the importance of public meetings. Based on our experience as a member of the Council, we sometimes observed that some discussions in closed consultations on certain issues could have just as well have taken place in public meetings with the presence of the membership, given that the information imparted did not affect the negotiations in progress.

We regret that in some cases, for reasons unknown, the Secretariat does not submit the written reports that have been requested in accordance with Council resolutions. To date, the written report requested of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), concerning Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, has not been submitted. The membership has been limited to listening to oral presentations by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. We believe that the strengthening of the working methods of the Security Council is linked to the effective implementation of its resolutions.

Venezuela expresses its concern regarding some permanent members' use of the Council's working methods to promote their particular agendas, thereby violating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we reject any attempt to bring to this organ issues that are not threats to international peace and security. In that connection, we are concerned about the abuses committed when convening Arria Formula meetings to deal with situations of countries that are not on the Council's agenda and that do not represent a threat to international peace and security. Venezuela believes that that type of informal meeting format should be governed by a regulatory body so as to avoid excesses being committed to the detriment of the purposes and principles of the Charter. There have been proposals and calls to that effect voiced in the recent past within the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, but they have been blocked by some permanent members.

In conclusion, we express our hope that improvements to the working methods will be carried out in a sustained manner with a view to increasing transparency, inclusiveness and accountability, and in strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I would like to thank Kuwait, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of February, for convening today's open debate on the working methods of the Council.

This debate is a testimony to the genuine interest of all Member States in working to enhance the transparency, inclusivity, and openness of the Council. The Council deliberates and discusses the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. I would like to recognize the work done by the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the updates to note by the President S/2017/507.

The work of the Council is a collective responsibility. It is undertaken on behalf of the whole membership and for the common good of humankind8. It is unfortunate that the work of the Council is often perceived to be secretive, when decisions that impact many are taken by a few. It is therefore important that information about the deliberations of the Council on matters of importance to the whole international community be shared in a timely and inclusive manner. Addressing those perceptions are important, too, for upholding the Council's legitimacy and credibility. It is also fundamental that every member of the Council able to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Council. The perceived gap between the five permanent members and the elected 10 must be addressed and countered.

The Maldives applauds the improvements we have seen in recent years in sharing information regarding the work of the Council with the general membership of the United Nations. Regular meetings between the Presidents of the Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council will go a long way in enhancing coordination among the work of all the principal organs of the United Nations. With regard to the discussions and deliberations of such meetings, we would also like to see the sharing of information, through appropriate channels, with the general membership. We call upon the current members of the Council, as well as incoming members, to prioritize improving transparency and inclusivity in their work.

The question of the veto deserves some consideration in our deliberations on working methods. While we recognize that it is a prerogative of the

Council's permanent members, we join others in calling for refrain in the exercise of the veto in situations of mass atrocities. We must not let the veto stand in the way of taking timely action.

An area where the Maldives believes that more work can be done is in enhancing the focus of the Council on the emerging realities of conflict in the world. In that regard, focusing on non-traditional threats to security, in addition to armed conflict, is essential. Extreme poverty, a shortage of resources, climate change and violent extremism are increasingly determining and exacerbating conflict.

Arria Formula meetings have been an important way of bringing diversity and fresh perspectives to the deliberations of the Council. We promote the regular holding of such meetings in order to address the convergences — but, more important, the divergences — in opinion on certain issues. That would advance the work of the Council and make it more relevant to the global realities of the day. We also hope that the discussions and views expressed in Arria formula meetings will find their way into the deliberations of the Council's formal agenda.

The Maldives hopes to be elected to the Council at the election to be held in June for the term 2019 to 2020. We will bring fresh views to the Council and lead the discussions in finding innovative and long-term solutions to emerging issues. We believe that creating an accountable, transparent and coherent Security Council is a clear way to lead the Organization into the twenty-first century.

The President: (*spoke in Arabic*) I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Kuwait for this opportunity to participate in the open debate on the working methods of the Security Council and to exchange views on the topic.

By virtue of Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, we members conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In discharging that duty, the Council acts on our behalf. In my statement I will refer to two specific issues to which Mexico attaches particular importance, as they go to the heart of the expectations and legitimate demands of the Member States with regard to the effectiveness of the Council.

First of all, I refer to the misnamed right to the veto. The Charter of the United Nations does not contain an explicit veto power for the five permanent members, but rather a voting rule that requires the concurring affirmative vote of the five permanent members. The veto therefore should not be seen as a right or a privilege, but as a responsibility that must be exercised as such. Unfortunately, the use of the veto — so far on approximately 280 occasions where it has been used — has prevented the effective fulfilment of the responsibilities entrusted to this organ. Far from being conducive to defending the collective interest with arguments that facilitate consensus among the members of the Council, the use of the veto has obstructed and derailed the common interest and has encouraged division among members. Abuse of the exercise of the veto is contrary to international law and violates the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience, which constitute cardinal principles of international humanitarian law today.

In 2015, Mexico and France jointly presented a political declaration stating that situations of mass atrocities, when committed on a large scale, specifically crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, can constitute a threat to international peace and security and require action by the international community. In such cases, the Security Council should not be prevented from acting for the use of the veto. The signatories of the declaration — 100 States so far — propose a collective and voluntary agreement among the permanent members, with a view to refraining from the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. The French-Mexican initiative — as well as the code of conduct promoted by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, which complements it — seeks to improve the efficiency of the Security Council while fostering a new culture of responsibility and accountability among the permanent members of the Council vis-à-vis the international community, in addition to visibly contributing to the effectiveness, legitimacy and accountability of the Council in carrying out its work.

We invite the permanent members to follow the example of France, a country that, by promoting this initiative, has shown determination and a deep sense of collective responsibility. We also invite those countries that have not done so to join the French-Mexican initiative, which is still open for signature.

The second issue that Mexico wishes to draw attention to are the continuous references to Article 51

of the Charter of the United Nations by some States to address threats to international peace and security with military action, especially against non-State actors. Mexico is troubled that such a practice, coupled with the ambiguous language of recent Council resolutions, runs the risk of a de facto broadening of exceptions to the general prohibition on the use of force, as set out in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, in an irregular manner.

Beyond the substantive issues, my delegation is very concerned by the way in which the Security Council deals with letters, a matter that falls within their working methods. First, there is a lack of transparency regarding how such letters are processed. As far as my delegation is aware, the letters are not published or referenced in *The Journal of the United Nations*, so that even in cases where they have an official public document number it is extremely difficult not only to obtain the text but even to know that letters were submitted. Likewise, my delegation does not know whether the Council, after receiving such a letter, beyond acting as a filing office, holds some formal or informal debate to study and consider its content.

Given the importance and gravity of the issues addressed in those letters, as well as the interest that this represents for all Member States, we hope that the Security Council will review and modify its working methods in order to lend transparency to the way in which it responds to the letters addressed to it that invoke the inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Galbavy (Slovakia): As this is the first time that I am speaking before the Security Council this year, I would like to congratulate your country, Mr. President, on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and I wish you a successful chairmanship in the month of February. I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate, and I also thank Mr. Martin for his briefing.

Improving and streamlining the ways in which the Security Council conducts its work is important for the effective and efficient work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security, as well as for the implementation of its decisions by the wider membership.

The year 2016 marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the first note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) on the working methods of the Council, after intensive work by the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. My delegation had an opportunity to be a part of that important effort, and subsequently to chair the Informal Working Group in 2007, following the able leadership of Japan. In fact, Slovakia was the first Member State appointed to chair the Informal Working Group for a full year. Our chairmanship aimed to ensure broader implementation of the first note. We are happy to observe that since then two subsequent versions of the note, notably in 2010 and 2017, were elaborated, also under the Japanese chairmanship. Presidential note S/2017/507, adopted in August last year, now addresses nearly all aspects of Council practice.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the Security Council to improve its working methods and commend to the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. It is important to continue to strengthen efforts to fully implement the existing measures and commitments set out in the updated note and other relevant documents. At the same time, the pursuit for more transparency, inclusiveness, representation and accountability of the Security Council must remain a continuous and consistent process. While recognizing achievements and being mindful of existing challenges, my country is of the view that more attention could be given to the following areas in future.

First, efforts aimed at enhancing the openness of the work of the Security Council, including the work of its subsidiary bodies, should continue. Interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other Member States, in particular those directly concerned and affected, should be further enhanced and expanded.

Secondly, the substantive engagement of the Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries should be further improved to strengthen the basis for decision-making in the Council as well as the incentive for the general membership to support peacekeeping operations.

Thirdly, we believe that further development of more active and meaningful relationships and interactions with the Peacebuilding Commission and its configurations and the Human Rights Council,

where appropriate, could increase the effectiveness of Security Council response to conflict and strengthen its role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Fourthly, there must be further consideration of ways to improve the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council — which are crucial for the implementation of Council decisions — as well as inter-committee coordination. That is especially relevant to the working methods of sanctions committees, given the impact and scope of the Council's sanction regimes.

Lastly, I fully concur with your observation, Mr. President, in the concept note that you circulated for this debate, that

> "[i]t is important for the Security Council to conduct constructive debates on its working methods continuously and periodically." (*S/2018/66, annex, para. 7*)

The role of non-permanent members in shaping and codifying Security Council working methods has proved to be very valuable and constructive. They bring fresh ideas and are instrumental in adopting decisions on new working processes.

I would like to wish you and your country, Mr. President, only the greatest success in your chairmanship of the Informal Working Group for the current year, building on previous development achievements and making further improvements where possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and your team on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I wish you every success in carrying out your work. We would also like to thank Mr. Ian Martin for his comprehensive briefing today.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, of which my country is a member.

Uruguay has always supported efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council in order to give them greater transparency and efficiency. Although progress has been made, we must continue working to further advance such achievements. In my statement I would therefore like to refer to three aspects that we consider to be pertinent.

First of all, increased interaction between the Council and the membership should be encouraged. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations provides that the Security Council is to act on behalf of States Members of the Organization. Accordingly, it is appropriate to encourage the holding of meetings in formats that promote transparency and improve information flow with the wider membership. Public meetings, open debates, informal interactive dialogues, Arria Formula meetings and wrap-up sessions are all mechanisms that make it possible to have greater interaction between the members of the Council and the rest of the membership.

Uruguay supports the holding of briefings where members of the Council can deliver public statements. In addition to promoting transparency, that enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of the work of the Council. Closed consultations should essentially be restricted to cases where it is necessary to deal with sensitive issues or which require further debate or interaction among the 15 Council members. Throughout its recently concluded participation as a non-permanent member, Uruguay followed the practice of making public statements in all open meetings held by the Council in order to promote transparency.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize the need to increase consultations with the troop- and police-contributing countries in all phases of peacekeeping operations. At a time where Member States are making progress in the reform process of peacekeeping operations to make them more efficient and effective, Uruguay underscores the value of a productive relationship between those who mandate, plan, administer and execute peacekeeping operations. In that regard, the strengthening of triangular cooperation among the Security Council, the troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat is a central aspect that must be considered in the reform process. In that connection, we already have a good theoretical and practical framework available.

Theoretically speaking, the report (A/71/19) of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations devotes and entire section to such cooperation. Similarly, within the scope of the Security Council, the note by the President S/2017/507, updated in August, also provides for valuable means of enhancing such

cooperation. In practice, we note that consultation meetings — both formal and informal — are held between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries. In our view, both formats are complementary and can be further enhanced. On the other hand, the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations has also proven to be a conducive environment for the three actors to discuss relevant issues.

Finally, the question of the veto is the third issue that I wish to address. The existence of the veto is a major obstacle to the work of the Council, which has often been paralysed in cases where its action is imperative in order to be able to respond to the threat or perpetration of atrocities. Uruguay reiterates its commitment to the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, as well as to the French-Mexican initiative on limiting the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocities, as we are convinced that the veto should not be used to block Council actions that seek to prevent or eliminate abhorrent crimes committed in complete disregard for human dignity.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the sisterly State of Kuwait for convening this meeting, and to congratulate it on its non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We wish the delegation of Kuwait every success in assuming the presidency of the Security Council in February. We also thank Mr. Ian Martin for his objective and exhaustive briefing.

The concept note (S/2018/66, annex) that you circulated, Sir, contains important references to previous attempts to review the working methods of the Security Council, in particular note by the President S/2017/507, which highlights many ways to improve the working methods of the Council. Those include, most notably, ensuring that consultations are more objective and interactive, and adapting the work of the Security Council to permit non-Member States to participate in it as appropriate, as well as reinforcing the accountability of the Council and the transparency of its work. The items on the agenda should be more detailed, as well as convening more open consultations.

We would like to reaffirm the importance of convening open debates on a regular basis on the working methods of the Security Council, as this is an issue in the interests of all Member States that aspire that the Council works in the best possible way. The working methods of the Council should adapt to the continuous changes, progress should be evaluated as well as shortcomings identified, while different proposals and points of view ought to be heard so that they can be addressed.

In that regard, I must commend the work carried out by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to increase the transparency of its work. We also underscore the contents of presidential note S/2016/619, on the work of the Chairs of the subsidiary organs of the Council. Indeed, the Chairs — including Chairs of the sanctions committees — must present informal periodic briefings to all Member States on their activities, specifying when and where such meetings will take place.

It is very important to step up coordination, cooperation and interaction among the main organs of the United Nations, namely, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies, including the Main Committees. There is also a need to strengthen coordination between the Council and regional and subregional organizations, as stipulated by Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, on the maintenance of international and regional peace and security.

It is also necessary to strengthen approaches that would enable the Council to prevent conflicts, particularly through negotiation, investigation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, as well as other peaceful means stipulated in Chapter VI of the Charter and options enabling the Council to support the good offices deployed by the Secretariat with a view to achieve peace and stability and maintain human rights.

With regard to the holding of closed informal meetings, the question of addressing the details of such meetings at briefings for Member States continues to be a point of discussion. Nevertheless, such transparency must also be guaranteed in press releases and presidential statements, as mentioned in note S/2017/507. Indeed, such practices help to build trust between Council members and other Member States.

Nonetheless there is a need to hold consultations in open meetings to enable all Member States to listen to different opinions on the issues discussed within the Council pertaining to international peace and security.

We are all aware that political trends play a significant role in those discussions, especially in times of crises or in rapidly developing situations.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain acknowledges the importance to continue discussions on the working methods of the Security Council. We hope to work with other Member States to develop the working methods and to guarantee enhanced coherence between United Nations organs, as well as introduce the necessary changes to ensure that the Council can fulfil its mission in the best possible way.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Mendoza García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by thanking you and your delegation, Mr. President, for convening today's debate, as well as for responsibility and seriousness you have shown in taking over the leadership of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We should not omit to mention the major work that Japan has done in this area, and we appreciate the update to the note contained in the annex to S/2017/507, compiled in the latest version of the Green Book. We also appreciate the briefing by Mr. Ian Martin, Executive Director of the Security Council Report, and all of his work and collaboration with States both within and outside the Council over the years. We wish him every success in his future projects.

The transparency of our decision-making processes and the accountability of our representatives to the people they represent are derived from the increasingly solid principles of the bodies in our Organization, whichever they are, and the updated note 507 constitutes an important step forward in terms of strengthening the transparency of the Security Council's work. In that regard, we are pleased to see the progress that has been made, such as the inclusion of new measures designed to improve the Council's efficiency and manage its time better; more interactive and focused consultations; and fostering the practice of providing States with more detailed, substantive reports on informal consultations.

Another very important topic is the affirmation that any member of the Security Council can act as a penholder or co-penholder. We call for greater participation by the 10 non-permanent members in this regard, as well as formalized consultations among all members of the Council when making decisions on the distribution of these responsibilities. We also believe it is important to establish procedures for informal consultations, including allowing sufficient time for the consideration of proposals and establishing silence procedures whereby any member of the Council may request that the silence period be extended or, failing that, may break the silence when deemed necessary. We believe that such procedures would help to democratize these processes. Similarly, we should encourage the practice of enabling members to postpone the adoption of decisions or the outcomes of open debates in order to take into consideration the contributions of those participating in the debates.

Where open debates are concerned, we should ensure that they can be used as platforms for other stakeholders who can make positive contributions to them. We hope that will encourage the participation of representatives of civil society, especially women, who can provide perspectives on their experiences and rights. We believe the Council should also show greater interest in contributions from those who have a legitimate interest in its decisions or are affected by them.

We would like to emphasize once again the importance of improving relations, communication and cooperation between the General Assembly and other relevant bodies and the Council, with the goal of working jointly to preserve and maintain international peace and security. It is a positive that progress has been made in the Council's relations with regional bodies, for example by establishing annual consultations with the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Such practices should be institutionalized, as should regular consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries.

We urge that appointments of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies be made with greater transparency and timeliness, and that the new members of the Council be consulted about them.

Lastly, we would like to echo the words of the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, of which we are a member, by reiterating the need to define limits to the use of the veto, such as prohibiting its use for issues of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and large-scale violations of human rights, as well as on those related

to the responsibility to protect, as stipulated in the ACT code of conduct.

My delegation reaffirms its conviction that the working methods represent a fundamental part of the process of comprehensively reforming the Security Council. Proper implementation of the agreed measures, which so far has not been comprehensive, and the inclusion of new measures to improve working methods will help to make the Council's actions more effective and will improve its transparency and accountability. We believe that substantive reform of the Security Council's working methods will enable us to help remove the obstacles that so often hinder its effectiveness and its relations with other bodies.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for your patience, and for deciding to make this open debate on working methods a focus of your presidency. I would also like to thank you for your guiding concept note (S/2018/66, annex), and to pay tribute to Mr. Ian Martin for his remarkable work not only on working methods, about which I would like to share some thoughts, but on all issues linked to the Security Council.

First, dealing with the working methods of the Security Council is just as important as the discussions that are also taking place on restructuring the Council's membership. They are both crucial tracks towards Security Council reform and we should not let any shortcomings of either track hamper us.

Secondly, it is obvious that changing the Council's working methods will improve the sense of ownership of the general membership, who, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the ability to act on their behalf. Needless to say, the Security Council's growing responsibilities render its working methods even more important, and the scope and consequence of its decisions require that it work towards an even greater degree of transparency, understanding and acceptance.

Clearly, the Council's decisions must be accepted and implemented. In that regard, we consider it essential to consider how those decisions are prepared and how they evolve, particularly where sanctions are concerned. The working methods should ultimately affirm the connections between the members of the Council and the general membership. All nations should really feel that the Council is acting on their behalf and for the benefit of the maintenance of peace and security in the world, and they should not feel disenfranchised by its working methods. I would like to suggest some ideas about how we see things with regard to practical areas where improvement should be possible and sometimes essential.

First, considering that it has been 36 years since the last amendment to the rules of procedure was adopted (resolution 528 (1982)), it is high time to seek something less provisional and confirm established practices. The number of public meetings should increase, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations. Ironically, the wider membership's participation on certain issues is sought after, but they have no real possibility of being consulted or contributing information when required. Closed meetings and informal consultations are certainly necessary, but they should be the exception. A form of briefing of the wider membership should be a rule after such meetings. The Council's establishment of subsidiary bodies should accord with the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and they should function in a way that enables adequate and timely information on their activities to be provided to the general membership.

The annual reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be more explanatory, comprehensive and specifically analytical in assessing the Council's work, including cases where the Council has failed to act and the views expressed by its members during discussion of the agenda item under consideration. Pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council should submit special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly. The Council should ensure that its monthly assessments are comprehensive and analytical and issued in a timely fashion. The General Assembly may consider proposing parameters for the elaboration of such assessments. The Council should fully take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Charter.

Although tremendous amounts of work and energy go into negotiating agreements on many working

methods, some are not properly heeded and some are never implemented. We believe that cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations is crucial. States that have undertaken mediation initiatives should be given ample opportunity to interact with the Council. At the end of the day, that would be of benefit to the international community as a whole, as such endeavours are aimed at ensuring early-warning, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the promotion of peace.

While stressing that the working methods of the Security Council are an integral part of the reform process, we reaffirm the African Common Position in that regard. We note that all but one open debate on the working methods was held at the initiative of an elected member, including today. I salute your instrumental role in that regard, Sir.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Gad (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since this is the first time the delegation of Egypt is participating in the work of the Security Council under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your duties. I would also like to express our sincere wish that you have every success at the helm of the Council. I am extremely delighted as well to see you leading the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We are confident that your experience as an active spokesperson on behalf of one of the main groups dealing with intergovernmental negotiations for Security Council reform will undoubtedly augur well for your chairmanship of the Working Group.

I would also like to commend your initiative in convening this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council at the beginning of this year and at the beginning of your chairmanship of the Working Group. This is an opportunity for all States Members of the United Nations, including members and non-members of the Council, to express their opinion as to how to move forward, based on progress made in recent years on the working methods of the Security Council. This includes the update of note S/2017/507 of the President of the Security Council under the Japanese chairmanship of the Informal Working Group.

The broad participation in today's debate demonstrates Member States' ongoing interest in developing the working methods of the Security Council. It shows their conviction that, when the Security Council fulfils its mandate of maintaining international peace and security, it would be acting on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, as stipulated in article 24 of the Charter. The practical implementation of Article 24 requires continuous strive to develop the working methods of the Security Council in order to ensure that it becomes more democratic and inclusive in its decision-making process and that it involves the participation of all its members — permanent and elected — so that the Council becomes more open and transparent in its interactions with Members of the Organization and responds to their concerns and ideas.

All of these issues were a prime target for Egypt during its participation in the Security Council. Egypt participated in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and in updating note S/2017/507, which is a compilation of all innovations in terms of the working methods of the Security Council. I would briefly like to talk about five points.

First, the functioning of the Security Council is a collective responsibility that requires full participation by all its members — both permanent and elected — on an equal footing. It calls for a fair distribution of duties and functions, including in drafting Council documents by the penholder. Through such a fair distribution, the decision-making process would be more democratic and inclusive, and Security Council resolutions would represent all its members' opinions in a balanced fashion and would also take into consideration the experience that some members have with certain issues, situations or crises that are taking place in the particular regions to which those countries belong.

Secondly, the discussions between the members of the Security Council must be transparent and inclusive. Information should be available to all members, who would be able to participate in discussions on issues under consideration. Sufficient time needs to be allocated to studying draft resolutions and other texts before they are submitted for adoption.

Thirdly, given the complicated nature of conflicts on the Security Council's agenda, there is a need for comprehensive approaches that take into consideration the different dimensions of the conflicts throughout their different stages. That would ensure an ongoing response from United Nations organs in terms of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Political solutions would always be given priority. It is also important to highlight the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and its contribution to the work of the Council in terms of the conflicts on its agenda. The programmes of work of the Security Council and the PBC must be coordinated to ensure that the Council receives the PBC's contribution at the right time and before the Council considers the issues concerned. The procedure for proposing informal informative discussions with the PBC on issues that are on the Council's agenda must also be streamlined.

Fourthly, and in the same vein, we consider it very important to develop close coordination between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries in the context of peacekeeping operations to ensure the greatest understanding possible between the Council and those countries in reviewing the mandates that their troops have to implement on the ground and the means of overcoming the complex challenges that those troops face.

Fifthly, the complicated and interconnected nature of threats to international peace and security requires close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. We therefore commend the contents of note S/2017/507 on the annual joint consultative meetings between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. We underscore the importance of the informal interactive dialogues between the two Councils, which should be held more often. The note also mentions implementing joint missions to the field by the two Councils.

Our term in the Security Council enabled us to get to know the functions and working methods of the sanctions committees. They are one of the instruments that the Council has at its disposal under the Charter of the United Nations to manage threats to international peace and security. The Council has made significant progress in developing the concept of sanctions. They changed from being comprehensive measures to become more intelligent and effective at reducing their negative and unintended impact on civilians and countries that are not parties to the conflict.

The specific nature of the different threats to international peace and security means that any sanctions regime must be designed in a way that is in line with the nature of those threats, and therefore deals with those threats according to available data. Of course, the specific nature does not mean that accumulated expertise and lessons learned need to be disregarded in each new case. It is therefore important to form a genuine partnership among the Security Council, Member States and stakeholders through mechanisms and channels that allow the parties to be heard and their opinions to be understood. That is one of the tools that would enable more progress within current and future sanctions regimes. That is also an opportunity for the Council to discuss this matter on a regular basis and to adopt necessary measures.

In conclusion, Egypt has sought to make a positive contribution to the efforts to develop the United Nations sanctions regime. In July 2017, Egypt organized an Arria Formula meeting to shed light on the experiences of three brotherly African nations and to understand the impact of sanctions on the restoration of stability in those countries. During the Egyptian presidency of the Council in August 2017, a briefing was also held to discuss the same issue (see S/PV.8018). Those meetings showed the need for more efforts to be made to improve United Nations sanctions regimes. Egypt was keen to circulate a report to the Council with a summary of the meetings, as well as ideas and recommendations from a national perspective that resulted from that fruitful dialogue with Council members. We believe that multilateralism is a collective effort based on progress achieved. We hope that the report will be a positive contribution to any future effort aimed at improving United Nations sanctions regimes.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker on the list of speakers.

Before I conclude this meeting, I would like once again to thank Mr. Martin for his briefing and for participating in this meeting for six full hours. I would also like to thank all Member States that took part in the meeting and provided ideas and suggestions. They will be very useful in our endeavour to make the Council's work more transparent and to improve its working methods. This will definitely be an ongoing process and will not be time bound.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8176

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8176th meeting

Wednesday, 7 February 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alotaibi	(Kuwait)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2018/76)

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18-03500 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2018/76)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Tanin joins today's meeting via video-teleconference from Pristina.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Vlora Çitaku to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/76, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tanin.

Mr. Tanin: At the outset, I would like to congratulate all the new Member States that have joined the Security Council in 2018. In particular, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and Kuwait on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Today I will update the Council on new developments, some of which are well documented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/76) before the Council, while focusing on key facts that have dominated the reporting period and the days that followed.

The new enlargement strategy of the European Union (EU) for the Western Balkans was launched yesterday. It is the most ambitious and far-reaching framework for engagement since the Thessaloniki Summit of 2003. The new strategy paves the way for enlargement linked to political and socioeconomic reform, as well as reconciliation and a lasting resolution of the disputes. There was mixed reaction in Kosovo but most Pristina leaders emphasized the importance of the new strategy for the realization of Kosovo's EU perspective. Within the new framework, it is clear that dialogue and the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina is a prerequisite for Kosovo's EU aspirations.

While there have been a number of formal and informal high-level contacts of leaders from Pristina and Belgrade, for more than a year, the dialogue has produced little substantive progress at the technical level. A number of standing agreements are yet to be fully implemented. Among those, the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities is essential. The year 2018 can provide new momentum for that dialogue. As the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy herself highlighted yesterday, the dialogue could be positively concluded with the sufficient will of the leaders and the adequate encouragement of the international community.

The recent attempt to abrogate the law on the Specialist Chambers by a number of members of the ruling coalition in the Kosovo Assembly drew attention and raised grave concerns among all stakeholders about Kosovo's commitment to justice and the impartial application of the rule of law. The establishment of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, endorsed by the Assembly in 2015, was a major achievement for Kosovo. Yet, in contradiction to that advancement, on the evening of 22 December 2017, some Kosovo members of Parliament launched an effort to revoke a key law supporting the work of the Specialist Chambers. Nearly all regional and international partners of Kosovo made it clear that such a move, if successful, would be deeply damaging to Kosovo's aspirations and reputation. Some political leaders withdrew their support for that proposal. However, for now, the motion to repeal the law remains on the Assembly's agenda. The President of the Assembly of Kosovo assured me that leaders in Pristina would stand by their international commitments. I take this opportunity to reiterate that the court does

not target any particular community or group but only the criminal responsibility of individuals. That is well known by many people in Kosovo who understand that repealing the Specialist Chambers is simply not an option. The only way forward is by accepting justice.

The murder, on 16 January, of Oliver Ivanović, the prominent Kosovo Serb politician, in broad daylight sent shockwaves throughout Kosovo and across the region, raising concerns about the prospect of another wave of political instability. Hours after it took place, I condemned the murder, calling for calm and for swift and decisive work by the investigating authorities. All representatives of the international community were united in that view. Moreover, I have urged all parties to work together to ensure that the perpetrators of that brutal act are brought to justice.

It is important to note that the leaders in Belgrade and Pristina have reacted to the event in a prompt and responsible manner. Since the Kosovo Police are leading the investigation, Pristina and Belgrade have come to an understanding on sharing information and supporting the process. Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić visited Kosovo shortly after the crime and told the Kosovo Serb communities in the north and the south of Kosovo that peace was of paramount importance. I would also like to underline the constructive role of the Pristina officials in facilitating that visit.

In my meetings with leaders in Pristina, they made it clear to me that they are doing whatever is necessary to find the perpetrators of that crime and the motives for the killing. Belgrade is cooperating with the investigation but concerns remain, including about the efficiency of information exchange. Failure to identify the perpetrators would not only be a terrible miscarriage of justice but also undermine confidence on all sides.

In 2017, Kosovo underwent parliamentary and municipal elections and the formation of a new Government. The people of Kosovo have high expectations of their Government and the Assembly given their needs and the promises made to them. The harsh realities of everyday life in Kosovo — unemployment, challenges to good governance and economic and social development, as well as corruption and organized crime — all require political actors to come together, transcend their differences and achieve unity of purpose for the good of the people. They will be assisted in that by ensuring a positive and productive relationship with the international community and all institutional presences on the ground.

A welcome example has been the unified efforts of political parties to adopt the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I commend the Government's commitment to strive to end poverty, improve education, prioritize gender equality, protect the environment, promote a just and peaceful society and ensure prosperity for all. Those commitments are fundamental to overcoming the challenges facing Kosovo.

The international community continues to assist the Kosovo institutions in promoting justice, the rule of law and human rights. The Government of Kosovo adopted four draft laws on the functioning of the judicial system aimed at increasing its efficiency and transparency. I would like to mention that judicial integration is moving forward, with officials at the Basic Court and Basic Prosecution Office of Mitrovica working as part of a unitary Kosovo justice system. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is working hand in hand with the other international presences in order to enable the full functioning of that integrated system, following up on issues such as full compliance with language rights.

At the same time, we take note of the decision of the Government of Kosovo to recognize and verify the status of victims of conflict-related sexual violence, including the allocation of monthly pensions for survivors. Additionally, I acknowledge the appointment by the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, of the Deputy Chair of the Kosovo Government Commission on Missing Persons.

Despite those important steps, many challenges remain on furthering the rule of law and strengthening human rights in Kosovo. Efforts in those areas must be guided by international best practices. Among a number of setbacks to the rule of law, the use of presidential pardons for three individuals convicted of murder in the so-called Hajra family case was particularly concerning. Human rights protections should not be diminished by political considerations or ethnic dimensions; such attempts would cast a dark shadow over the promises of a rules-based society.

UNMIK and its partners have assisted in strengthening the role of women and youth, as well as in helping consolidate their essential contribution to peace, security and trust-building across communities.

The annual international campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence took place throughout Kosovo during the reporting period. The campaign highlighted actions on international, governmental and civil society levels that contributed to public awareness of the drivers and consequences of violence against women and girls. Women still face an uphill challenge in electoral politics. Of 204 mayoral candidates across all of Kosovo's municipalities, only eight were women. A concerted effort is required to achieve a more balanced representation and provide women with a more level-playing field.

Similarly, the youth and peace and security agenda remains important in Kosovo. The youth of Kosovo, despite their understandable frustrations with the status quo, provide hope for a better present and future. UNMIK continues to engage young people from across Kosovo through initiatives such as the United Nations Youth Assembly in Kosovo. I am inspired by the strength of character of the young leaders I have met — leaders who have the courage to join hands across societal divides and develop a common strategy and vision for a successful, multi-ethnic society.

Building trust between communities remains essential for the Mission. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the engagement of all institutions and the assistance of the international community to build bridges for long-term trust. Our Mission has undertaken a number of initiatives focused on supporting grassroots trust-building and using the know-how of the United Nations to help achieve that end. There are many Kosovo leaders, at all levels across society, who are committed to that agenda and actively supporting it.

This moment represents an opportunity for both progress and moving the political dialogue forward. I completed a series of consultations just before this Council meeting with leaders and officials in Pristina, Belgrade and Tirana. Despite the significant differences voiced, I am convinced that those leaders also have a broader understanding of the nature of the challenges that need to be overcome and equally, not to continuously postpone action to another day. I would like to underline that despite all the disagreements, the potential for trust and more forward-looking decision-making should not be underestimated.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Tanin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and his Special Representative, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for their submission of the report before us (S/2018/76) and their overall dedication and engagement in the realization of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under resolution 1244 (1999). I would also like to recognize and express my gratitude to the President and the members of the Security Council for the extensive attention they accord to the continued consideration, review and understanding of the issue, which is of paramount importance to the Republic of Serbia.

Some members of the Security Council suggested before this meeting that, in the delivery of our statements, we stick to the topic of the meeting, demonstrate constructiveness, maintain calm and avoid all provocations and confrontation. Just as I did in my previous statement (see S/PV.8100), I shall focus on the current situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the developments that took place in the preceding quarter, as well as on the report of the Secretary-General. I hope that the representative of Pristina will also honour those recommendations and that she will not, as she did in the past, hold a history lesson full of falsehoods, unfounded accusations and unwarranted embellishments of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, disregarding, all along, the report of the Secretary-General and the realities on the ground.

The reality on the ground is that the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations was signed as early as August 2013, and that Agreement provides for the establishment of a community of Serb-majority municipalities. I would like to remind those present that I signed that Brussels Agreement together with Hashim Thaçi and Catherine Ashton, the latter on behalf of the European Union. As members of the Council know very well, the establishment of the community is a question of crucial and enormous importance for Serbia as it aims to ensure and protect the vital interests of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and improve their everyday lives.

For four and a half years now, Serbia has been waiting patiently for Pristina to fulfil its fundamentally important obligation. In the meantime, 30 non-permanent Member States have been in and out of this esteemed organ, and each and every one of them called on Pristina to fulfil its obligations. Unfortunately,

rather than forward, the movement thus far has only been backward. In his report, the Secretary-General notes that

> "There was no progress towards the establishment of the community/association of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo ... No indications were provided about when and how steps towards the establishment of the community/association might be taken." (*S/2018/76, para. 21*)

That is the reality on the ground.

I would also like to remind members on this occasion that Serbia's participation in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina was both dedicated and responsible, and that, irrespective of the hurdles and challenges, my country approached it with the strong conviction that there is no alternative to such an approach and that only within a status-neutral framework is it possible to contribute to regional peace, security and stability, as well as the realization of conditions for the Western Balkans unimpeded progress towards European Union membership.

Convinced that this approach has no alternative and that all issues must be resolved peacefully through dialogue, for its part Serbia has fulfilled its obligations consistently and in good faith. I emphasize, once again, that Serbia is ready to continue engaging in dialogue; however, it is questionable if a new agreement would have any meaning at all, given that four and a half years after the signing of the Brussels Agreement we continue to be saddled with a lack of indications as to when and how it will be implemented for the establishment of the community.

The reality on the ground is that Oliver Ivanovic, the leader of the Civic Initiative "Freedom, Democracy, Justice", was shot dead in Kosovska Mitrovica on 16 January and his murder has dramatically jeopardized security in Kosovo and Metohija. We welcome the reaction of Special Representative Tanin, who condemned that gruesome act and called for a speedy and resolute investigation, providing assurances that all international agencies will support the authorities and help them arrest those responsible for the crime.

The murder of Oliver Ivanović is a senseless terrorist act that threatens the stability not only of northern Kosovo and Metohija, but also the entire region. Serbia's political leaders and State authorities called for a calm and stable situation in the province. My country's responsible approach to the situation was confirmed on 21 and 22 January when the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, visited the Serbs in northern and central Kosovo and Metohija, and called on them to maintain stability, peace, calm and dignity, while emphasizing that all problems must be solved peacefully through dialogue.

Aware of the seriousness of the situation, Serbia sent correspondence to UNMMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), requesting that its State organs take part in the investigation of the murder, convinced that their participation would help to quickly and efficiently establish the truth. The request was reiterated by President Vučić in his telephone conversation with Hashim Thaçi. It was rejected by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo and Metohija, which insisted that the investigation be conducted exclusively by the investigation authorities of Kosovo. However, three weeks after the murder, we have no information whatsoever except for statements by Pristina representatives that the settling of scores with local mafias was involved and that the murder was not ethnically motivated. Such statements have served only to obfuscate Pristina's inability or its lack of readiness to conduct an investigation into the gruesome crime.

I emphasize once again that bringing those who ordered the crime to be committed and its perpetrators to justice, as well as establishing the motives of the crime, are of vital importance to maintaining peace and trust among the people of Kosovo and Metohija. The tragic event proves that the overall security situation in the entire province is very serious, volatile and sensitive, and that the presence of the international community is required.

The reality on the ground is also that, at the end of last year and at the start of this year, the power structure and the political parties and leaders of Kosovo and Metohija tried to revoke the Specialist Chambers law intended to conduct trials for crimes allegedly committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). There is no need to assure the Council of Serbia's concern about the situation because Council members were themselves surprised and concerned about the developments. In his report the Secretary-General expresses deep disappointment. He states that it is a step backwards in one of the most important areas, and strongly calls on Pristina to demonstrate its commitment to justice and the rule of law.

United States Ambassador Greg Delawie stated that any initiative to change the law governing the Specialist Chambers will have a profound negative impact on Kosovo' future in Europe and its relations with the United States. The head of the European Union Office in Pristina, Nataliya Apostolova, stated that she was shocked by the Kosovo Assembly initiative to revoke or abrogate in any way the law governing the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office. German Ambassador Christian Heldt warned that the decision on the decision to establish Specialist Chambers could affect relations between Kosovo and its friends abroad. Those statements are clear evidence that the international community does not share the views of those who are behind the initiative, and that it believes that the heinous crimes committed against the Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija reported by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Special Rapporteur Dick Marty must not go unpunished and cannot be relativized or justified.

Mindful of the moral responsibility towards the victims and their families, we believe that the establishment of criminal responsibility in an impartial and credible way and the punishment of criminals will have a measurable impact on the fight against impunity and demonstrate that justice is achievable for all victims. I would like to assure the Council that Serbia is ready to provide the evidence it possesses on the commission of brutal crimes, which have no statute of limitations and must not be forgotten. In accordance with its laws and with international law, Serbia will continue to prosecute those for whom there is convincing evidence that they have committed criminal offences of war crimes against the civilian population in Kosovo and Metohija.

The positions held by some individuals in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government cannot and must not deter us from achieving justice. They do not release those individuals from criminal responsibility for perpetrating the offences. In that regard, we were concerned about and disappointed in INTERPOL's recent decisions to remove international arrest warrants for a certain number of persons from Kosovo and Metohija from its list, including Hashim Thaçi and Ramush Haradinaj. Let me state unequivocally that such decisions set a precedent that is at variance with the rules of the organization.

Regrettably, the so-called President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, pardoned three KLA members sentenced to 30 years in prison for killing all five members of the Albanian Hajra family near Glogovac in August 2001. The victims included 3-year-old Adelina and 9-year-old Mimoza. According to the EULEX report, their father, Hamsa Hajra, was a member of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia and the entire family was killed as an act of KLA retaliation. In a joint communiqué, the Embassies of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States in Pristina expressed deep concern about the decision taken by Hashim Thaçi to pardon the criminals. There is no need for me to assure the Council that the decision sparked concern among the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

I recall that, in addition to approximately 16,500 internally displaced persons in the province, more than 200,000 continue to reside outside Kosovo and Metohija in central Serbia more than 18 years after the arrival of the international presence. Only 1.9 per cent of them have achieved sustainable returns, to which UNMIK should pay additional and maximum attention. It is noted in the report that the lowest number of returns since 2000 was recorded in 2017. Regrettably, only 498 people returned to the province. On one hand, that statistic is shocking; on the other hand, it is understandable and raises the question of who wants to return to a place to suffer discrimination every day; where nationalistic and religious hatred is not punished; property is not protected; jobs are few; people are exposed to intimidation, arbitrary arrests and ethnically motivated violence; the grave sites of their forefathers cannot be visited; and where the rule of law is implemented by institutions that have not brought a single legally valid decision for the killing of a large number of Serbs since the end of the conflict?

I pose the question again: Who would want to return to that situation? Before those problems are resolved structurally and institutionally, regrettably, the number of returnees will regrettably only be lower. In his report the Secretary-General mentions the continued lack of progress in implementing the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo in favour of the Visoki Dečani Monastery in a case of disputed land ownership. I would also like to underscore that the protection of the historical, cultural and religious heritage of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija, which is at the same time an important part of European and world heritage, is a priority for the Republic of Serbia. There are harmful institutional attempts to conceal the true identity of Serbian heritage in the province, which is frequently designated as medieval Balkan or

Byzantine. However, such designations continue to be omitted from crucial Serbian heritage.

A responsible, realistic and rational approach is needed in the relations with Pristina. Serbia continues its internal dialogue to which President Vučić called its citizens. A working group has been established to support the dialogue. It is conducted at a number of levels and with the participation of all the relevant social groups. I assure the Council that Serbia wants to make a serious and responsible contribution to the stability of the region, political cooperation, understanding and economic progress. We want to offer a solution that would provide an opportunity for a historic agreement with the Albanian community in Kosovo and Metohija and will not cause new divisions, misunderstandings, instability and conflict. The solution must honour the interests of Serbia and the needs of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija. To achieve that goal, genuine commitment and determination on both sides are needed in order to build very necessary trust and respect.

To that end, I would like to point out that the inappropriate and disconcerting statements made by some leaders of Albanian political parties do not contribute to the creation of a constructive atmosphere for the achievement of a historic agreement. Let me emphasize in particular that Pristina's one-sided acts, as well as each and every attempt to solve problems unilaterally, are entirely unacceptable to Serbia. I underscore that Serbia is firmly opposed to Pristina's intention to form a Kosovo army. Those and other similar attempts are very dangerous and could threaten not only the security of the province and the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, but also the stability of the entire region.

In addition, we have witnessed for some time attempts by Pristina to become a full-fledged member of international organizations despite the opposition of a considerable number of countries, including even some of those that have recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo. The most recent instances of such efforts were Kosovo's attempts to become a member of UNESCO, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. All those attempts, let me point out, run contrary to the basic principles of international law and are detrimental to — while needlessly politicizing — the work of international organizations. I take this opportunity to express special gratitude to all the countries that, with regard to that issue, support Serbia and, at the same time, insist, together with Serbia, on principled respect for universally accepted norms of the contemporary international order as it relates to upholding consistently the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

I would also like to remind Council members that for a decade — that is, since Kosovo declared independence by a unilateral act — Serbia has patiently, dedicatedly and responsibly apprised the international community of the apparent danger resulting from unilateral acts and admonished that the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is a very dangerous and unacceptable precedent that, as we have witnessed, has already emboldened other separatist and secessionist movements all over the world. As in the past, Serbia continues to take measures to protect its national and State interests, with full respect for the basic principles of international law — primarily the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity as universal values reasserting freedom and equality among States and peoples. In that regard, I would like to thank once again those States that have not recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo for their consistent support and principled respect of the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1244 (1999). At the same time, I call on those States that have done so to reconsider their decision and accordingly encourage both sides to find a mutually acceptable solution through dialogue.

Lastly, I would like to call on all members of the Security Council to focus together on finding a compromise and sustainable solution to this decades-long question and fully support UNMIK in the meantime, as its unimpeded presence in Kosovo and Metohija is key to building lasting peace, stability and security, as well as confidence among communities, and solving the problems facing the members of the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities in the province. In that context, I would point out the importance of maintaining UNMIK's financial and personnel capacities, which will allow the Mission to meet the complex demands of the implementation of its mandate.

What I have spoken about today is a testament to the reality that there are many problems, that the security situation is volatile and that commitment, patience and hard work will be required for us to be able to communicate a different reality to the international community from this same Chamber in three months

from now. For its part, Serbia is looking forward to the future and ready to invest all its resources to make a contribution towards achieving those goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Ms. Çitaku.

Ms. Çitaku: It is an honour to be here today. This month is very special for me and my fellow citizens. On 17 February, just 10 days from today, Kosovo will celebrate its first double-digit birthday. As I sit at this table and in this revered Chamber, together with representatives of States with their admirable centuries-old traditions of statehood — representatives of nations that have given so much to humankind, from science and technology, to arts and sports — I cannot help but reflect on our journey as an independent republic and wonder what Kosovo will look like in 10, 20 and 100 years from today. I wonder: How well have we done as a young democracy in meeting the rightful expectations of the Kosovar people? How well have our institutions performed? How much has our society evolved, and, most important, what is the legacy that we will leave behind?

Ten years later, Kosovo has been recognized by the overwhelming majority of the free nations of the world. Today Kosovo is a member of dozens of regional and international organizations. We are also very much aware that we would never have made it this far without States Members' unwavering support. The United Nations was there for us in our darkest hour of need, and for that we will be forever grateful. Today I must pay tribute to one great man in particular — Sergio Vieira de Mello — who was the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo. When Mr. De Mello arrived in Kosovo he found a country in ruins, a nation torn apart and devastated by the pains and horrors of war. Yet he somehow managed to bring our people together and establish a United Nations administration in Kosovo. Sergio may no longer be with us, but he will always be remembered.

Ten years of statehood have taught us that survival and independence cannot alone sustain us alone. They are not our sole concerns. Freedom and food on the table are not the only things that people require. They require education, health care, respect and dignity. In Kosovo we have come to learn that statehood is not only about building Government and institutions. Civil society, the free press and the non-governmental sector are equally as important, and often a driving force for growth. According to international organizations, Kosovo enjoys greater freedom of speech today than any other country in the region. That remarkable achievement is entirely attributable to those Kosovar journalists, who never bow to power, surrender to threats or compromise the truth. In Kosovo we have a vibrant civil society that, independent of the Government, rallies around issues ranging from war crimes committed during the war in Kosovo and special courts, to air pollution and energy costs.

Although our institutions may have their flaws, the irrefutable truth is that our society has matured. All one has to do is observe the manner in which Kosovar society and media reacted to the unfortunate assassination of Oliver Ivanović. Unlike what would have probably occurred in the past, Mr. Ivanović's assassination was a murder that did not incite ethnic hatred in Kosovo. In fact, local citizens and politicians and the media — both Albanian and Serbian — agreed that organized crime in northern Kosovo was to blame for the murder. Of course, Mr. Ivanović himself was a controversial figure. Nonetheless, we will leave no stone unturned until the perpetrators of that crime against him are brought to justice.

Allow me to also briefly address the debate surrounding the Specialist Chambers. First, Kosovo has an exemplary record with regard to cooperating with international and local war crimes tribunals. No a single Kosovar Albanian indicted for war crimes has ever attempted to escape justice. However, that is not the case with any of the former Yugoslav republics. In fact, if one looks at the numbers, they show that more Albanians have been prosecuted and convicted for war crimes in Kosovo than Serbs. Something is tremendously wrong with that fact.

Secondly, no court can rewrite history or artificially impose moral parity. The oppressor and the oppressed are clearly defined in our recent tragic history.

Thirdly, people in Kosovo want justice. They want justice for all of the victims, regardless of their ethnicity. The sentiment has been displayed most powerfully in various forms over the past few weeks. As a point of reference, 80 members of Parliament voted to establish the special court. Forty-three signatures to have a debate about that court in the Parliament cannot, and will not, undo that.

However, while we are on the topic of war crimes, let me talk about crimes that the special court will not

be dealing with nor, for that matter, will any other court. Take the Qyshk massacre, the trial which completely fell apart in Serbia, despite the public testimony of Serbian paramilitary Zoran Rašković about the killing of Albanians by paramilitary units, which was abundantly reported by the media. Or, consider the execution of the Bytyqi brothers, for which another witness came forward to testify just last week. Once again, no measures were taken by the Serbian justice system. Until convicted war criminals cease to be praised and promoted, the feeling of impunity is here to stay.

We are pleased that INTERPOL has decided to remove Mr. Ramush Haradinaj and Hashim Thaçi from its warrant list. That is a clear signal that INTERPOL will no longer allow Serbia to misuse its red notices for political gains. For the Council's information, I note that the Serbian justice system has accused and convicted world leaders such as Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and most of the European Union Heads of State.

There is no doubt that Kosovo has made progress and taken major steps forward. We just concluded a nearly flawless electoral process. Every day, the Kosovar people are demanding more accountability from their elected representatives. According to the World Bank, Kosovo's gross domestic product growth rate in 2017 was 4.4 per cent — the highest figure reported in the region.

Needless to say, Kosovo is not a paradise, and many challenges still linger. Yet for every challenge, for every single institutional shortcoming, there is a success story — a role model citizen that defies the odds and pushes the boundaries. In a country where there is a lot left to be done to improve the quality of education, where we still have overcrowded classrooms and overworked teachers, we also have young girls like Doruntina Sylejmani, who won medals at the International Math Olympiad. Today Doruntina is studying at Princeton, with a full scholarship, and dreams of coming back to help her country.

At a time of disbelief and doubt over whether the justice system is worth fighting for, Shyhrete Berisha, who witnessed the brutal execution of her husband and her four children during the war in 1999, was exposed to yet another form of injustice. She had to battle for 18 long years just to get back the keys to her own house — the house in which she lived with her husband and children. Throughout those 18 years, Shyhrete did not lose faith. She never gave up, and neither must we. We owe it to Shyhrete and to the many others who share similar experiences to work as hard as we possibly can to improve our justice system and make sure that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law.

Today survivors of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo have a legally regulated status and can benefit from pensions because of women like Kadire Tahiraj. For years, this group of survivors of painful wartime violence was completely neglected by institutions and stigmatized by society. While the rest of us were either hiding away from the truth or being both blind and deaf to it, Kadire was diligently working with the survivors, offering them all she could — care, medicine, shelter, at times perhaps even just a shoulder to cry on. Kadire fought tirelessly and kept her resolve even when all the odds were stacked against her. Finally, 18 years after the war, the Government has allocated the necessary funds to implement programmes for these survivors.

It is because of women like Fahrije Hoti, that Krusha, a village in south-western Kosovo, is no longer known only for its tragic past. A young widow herself, living in a village where most of the adult male population was eradicated during the war, Fahrije resolved that the best way to honour the fallen was by building a better life for the ones that remain. She started by working her patch of land and, with little to no institutional support, managed to not only sustain herself, but also to help organize other women to cultivate their fields and open small farms and businesses. Today their products are customer favourites in stores across our country.

Although Kosovo remains the only country in Europe without visa liberalization, our talented youth transcend borders and inspire their peers throughout the European continent and beyond. Just last month, Forbes published its famous 30 Under 30 List. Three amazing Kosovar women — Blerta, Dafina and Bilna — made us all proud by appearing on them. These young ladies are working hard to increase the transparency and accountability of the Government by utilizing digital platforms and novel technology. They understand, better than most, that European integration is an internal dynamic, that it is, first and foremost, about building and applying standards of transparency at home. We are all proud of these young women, and I am sure that we will be hearing more from them.

Let us not forget the one and only Majlinda Kelmendi — our golden pride, our golden champion.

While Kosovo was struggling to become a member of the Olympic Committee, Majlinda often had to practice in halls without electricity or heat. Nevertheless, she turned down the millions that were offered to her to compete under a different flag. She patiently waited for her chance to represent Kosovo. And when she finally got the opportunity to compete in Rio de Janeiro, Majlinda made us all proud by winning a gold medal. In doing so, she also taught us a lesson, a lesson of integrity, perseverance and love for one's country.

Although Kosovo has many obstacles to overcome, it is these women who make me hopeful. Whenever we come up short, whenever we fail to deliver, courageous women like them are there to lift us up. Time and again they empower us by inspiring us. They challenge power and authority; they fight for justice and social norms. They encourage us to dream and to dare.

We are meeting today one day after the European Union published its strategy for the Western Balkans. While we in Kosovo believe that the language used to describe Kosovo's path forward should have been more specific, perhaps more concrete, there is absolutely no doubt as to where the future lies. Moreover, what is made very clear by this strategy is that Kosovo and Serbia must normalize relations and enter into a legally binding agreement. Now more than ever, it is crystal-clear that the new status quo and another frozen conflict do not represent normalization. Normalization can be achieved only through the recognition of Kosovo, and the sooner Serbia recognizes Kosovo, the better it will be for the entire region.

As I have stated numerous times, we in Kosovo believe that the appropriate platform and venue for dialogue is in Brussels. I want to reaffirm our commitment to the dialogue and to the implementation of every single agreement reached in Brussels. However, the United Nations has no role in this process. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo is neither a peacekeeping mission nor an administrative mission. The United Nations may choose to maintain an expensive mission in Kosovo, but we believe that its taxpayers' money could be put to much better use.

Women such as Fahrije, Kadire, Doruntina, Majlinda and many more do not have time for debates such as this one. While we meet here every three months to repeat the same old stories, they are out there changing the world, fighting for a better, brighter future for their families, their country and the global community. They do not have time to listen to us argue over whether the sky is blue. They know that my speech here today will not change anything, but their actions will. They are aware that Kosovo's independence is an irreversible fact, as confirmed by the ruling of the International Court of Justice. But they also know that it is in our power to create a more prosperous Kosovo to leave behind for the next generations, so that when we celebrate the next decades and centuries of independence, there will be a lot more to be proud of.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his update on recent developments. I also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for their briefings.

An issue of great concern for all of us is the recent murder of the prominent politician Oliver Ivanović, from North Mitrovica municipality, which took place on 16 January. We urge close cooperation with all interested parties so as to carry out a fair and objective investigation and bring those responsible for this heinous crime to justice as soon as possible.

Kazakhstan fully supports the statement of the political leaders, the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe condemning the murder and considers this barbaric act to be an attempt by some forces to disrupt the peace dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. In this regard, we call on the leaders of the two parties and local communities to avoid any further provocative rhetoric or actions that could lead to additional tensions and instability. Democracy, security, stability and economic development cannot be achieved without the rule of law, criminal justice and institutional and human-rights-related reforms, including the fight against corruption and organized crime, and addressing any outstanding shortcomings of the judiciary and the need for its depoliticization, impartiality and independence, including in the prosecution of war crimes.

We commend the steps taken by the Governments of Serbia and Kosovo under the auspices of EU High Representative Mogherini to continue the dialogue by holding a series of technical-level meetings in Brussels. My delegation also encourages all interested parties to

continue interacting to strengthen confidence-building measures, trust, dialogue and cooperation, with the engagement of representatives of the Government, the opposition, civil society, women and youth, the media and religious organizations.

The role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in this process is very important. During the reporting period, UNMIK launched 12 confidence-building measures to promote an interest in dialogue as well as intercommunal reconciliation in different parts of Kosovo. The question of returning refugees and displaced persons, together with their resettlement, cultural heritage and human rights, still have to be addressed.

Finally, we believe that peace and stability in this part of the world will be achieved only if the parties continue to fulfil their commitments in a positive spirit of mutual respect, understanding and compromise.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and the Ambassador of Kosovo for their statements.

In the light of the situation described by the Special Representative, I should like to underscore three points.

First, as this year marks the tenth anniversary of Kosovo's independence, I should like to recall that France steadfastly stands beside Kosovo in supporting it in the building of its institutions and in its efforts to achieve economic and social development and establish itself on the international stage. Numerous efforts have been undertaken in terms of building institutions and achieving economic development. Kosovo is a peacekeeping success — a success story. However, a great deal remains to be achieved, and Kosovo can count on our support in moving along that path. All are aware of our commitment to strengthening the rule of law and combating organized crime and corruption.

We welcome the smooth conduct of the municipal elections of 22 October and 19 November last, which, following the legislative elections of June 2017, marked a milestone in Kosovo political affairs, even though, as was underscored by the European Union election observation mission, the climate of intimidation against some candidates and their voters in Serb municipalities of Kosovo is to be deplored.

France also condemned the murder on 16 January of the Serb leader of Kosovo Oliver Ivanović and called for the circumstances to be brought to light. France, like its American and European partners, voiced its concerns at the attempt to call into question the Specialist Chambers for Kosovo, and a Franco-German mission visited Pristina to express that concern. We have duly taken note of the political commitment of the Kosovar authorities not to abrogate the law, as was just mentioned by Ms. Çitaku, and we trust that this plan will be definitively abandoned very shortly.

Secondly, in the light of the information provided by the Special Representative every three months, the Security Council must focus on the issue of refocusing UNMIK efforts and coordinating them with other international actors with a presence in Kosovo. At a time when the discussion is focusing on the future of peacekeeping operations, the responsibility that we shoulder as members of the Security Council is indeed to ensure that the means deployed by the United Nations are tailored fully to the situation on the ground.

To that end, UNMIK and the United Nations must continue to support the efforts of the EU and its European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo for peace, progress and stability in Kosovo.

I shall end on a third point: the future of Kosovo. France believes that this is a priority in the political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina conducted under the auspices of the European Union. The European Union is very clear in that regard: for both Serbia and Kosovo, rapprochement with the European Union is conditioned upon the complete normalization of their relations. France fully supports the mediation efforts led by the European Union and its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini.

The launch in Serbia of an internal dialogue on Kosovo is a positive sign, and the Serbian and Kosovar authorities have voiced their hope for giving new impetus to dialogue with a view to achieving full normalization of their relations. France fully supports this approach, which is critical for lasting peace and stability in the Western Balkans. Each side must do its part by adopting a constructive attitude and refraining from any unnecessary, or even dangerous, provocation. We also underline the importance of efforts to promote reconciliation and bringing communities closer together.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the lasting solution to the conflict lies in making common cause with the European Union. The future of the Western Balkans is in joining the European Union, as High Representative Mogherini stressed yesterday while pointing out that 2025 was the horizon to which we must aspire and that the prospects for reaching it are realistic.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Mr. Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his briefing and welcomes the presence and statement of His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. I have also listened carefully to the statement made by Ms. Çitaku.

Currently, the situation in the Kosovo region involves numerous complex factors. Resolution 1244 (1999) provides an important legal basis for resolving the question of Kosovo. All parties should act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions and seek through dialogue and negotiations a solution that is acceptable to all.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We understand Serbia's legitimate concern on the question of Kosovo and commend its efforts to strive for a political settlement.

China welcomes the continuation of the high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We hope that the two sides will reaffirm their strong commitment to a political settlement, continue their dialogue in a pragmatic and constructive manner, implement existing agreements and gradually increase mutual trust so as to build up favourable conditions for finding a lasting solution that is acceptable to all parties concerned.

Tolerance, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence serve the fundamental interests of all ethnic communities in Kosovo and are necessary for achieving development. China hopes that the relevant parties will always put the well-being of their people first, protect the legitimate rights and interests of all communities in Kosovo, refrain from action and rhetoric that might escalate the situation, and safeguard the peace, stability and development of the Balkans.

The sustained attention of the Security Council on the question of Kosovo is crucial for promoting its proper settlement. China supports the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under the leadership of Special Representative Tanin in implementing its mandate and in cooperating constructively with all parties. We hope that UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force will work in close collaboration and play a constructive role in improving the situation on the ground and achieving a proper settlement of the Kosovo issue.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Kosovo.

We welcome His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, to today's meeting and thank him for his presence and statement. I also thank Ambassador Vlora Çitaku for her statement.

Over the past year, Ethiopia has been consistent and clear in this position on the issue of Kosovo. We reaffirm our support for the peaceful and amicable solution of all outstanding issues between Belgrade and Pristina in accordance with the Brussels Agreement. We also welcome the ongoing efforts made by the European Union in facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/76), the holding of municipal elections in a peaceful manner is indeed encouraging. However, we also note from the report that the security situation in northern Kosovo is still fragile, and the murder of the Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanović is indicative of not only the prevailing tense security situation but also of how the situation is potentially dangerous. It is good that authorities in both Belgrade and Pristina are ready to cooperate in addressing this issue in spite of their emotionally-charged reaction initially. Identifying those responsible for the crime and bringing them to justice is no doubt important to reduce tension and restore calm. Special Representative Tanin could not have been more emphatic on the need to bring the killers to justice. We also appreciate his quick condemnation of the barbaric act.

We note that there was little substantive interaction between Belgrade and Pristina during the reporting

period, and we understand the murder of Mr. Ivanović has had its own impact. Some of the steps taken to implement the agreements reached within the framework of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union (EU) are encouraging, while the lack of progress on some of the key provisions of the EU-facilitated agreements, including, inter alia, on the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo, remains a source of concern.

It is our hope that the new leadership in both Belgrade and Pristina will continue to engage in dialogue and maintain the momentum in a positive and constructive spirit with a view to addressing outstanding issues and disagreements through peaceful means. That demands that both sides refrain from actions and statements that could cause ethnic discord and undercut efforts to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence conducive for dialogue. We will also support the call by the Secretary-General to the leaders in both Belgrade and Pristina to intensify their efforts aimed at implementing the agreements reached within the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue.

Ethiopia fully supports the work that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has been undertaking in discharging its mandates in line with resolution 1244 (1999). Its engagement with municipal authorities and community representatives in support of the efforts to protect the rights of communities and to promote intercommunity reconciliation and trust-building is commendable, as is the effort being made by Kosovo authorities to implement measures aimed at preventing violent extremism and radicalization by constructively engaging with young people and women. It is our hope that UNMIK will continue to promote political dialogue, strengthen community reconciliation and ensure security and stability in Kosovo and the region. We also recognize the significant role played by the European Union on matters concerning Kosovo, and we commend the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force for their valuable contributions in Kosovo in the area of the rule of law and security.

In conclusion, I would like to say that security and stability in Kosovo and the region will ultimately be ensured when there is political will and resolve on the part of both. In that respect, we once again encourage both parties to remain committed to dialogue and negotiation with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his excellent and comprehensive briefing, which provides greater clarity and a better understanding of the question of Kosovo. Indeed, his briefing demonstrated the need to tackle the political challenges in order to sustain and strengthen the progress made to date in Kosovo and for the benefit of the population. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States, for her intervention.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea conveys its condolences for the recent murder in broad daylight of Mr. Oliver Ivanović, leader of the Civic Initiative "Serbia, Democracy and Justice" party, and strongly condemns that horrendous crime. We join our voice to that of the political leaders of Belgrade and Pristina, the Secretary-General and members of the international community calling for the investigation of that crime and for that sad event not to derail the peace process in Kosovo. We commend the recommendation of Ambassador Çitaku, who said in her intervention that no effort would be spared to identify the perpetrators and to bring them to justice.

Equatorial Guinea is very clear about its position on the Kosovo issue and understands that the legal basis for a just resolution of the question of Kosovo is resolution 1244 (1999). Equatorial Guinea always advocates for direct, fair, frank and inclusive negotiations to resolve any dispute, and the position of Equatorial Guinea on the Kosovo issue remains the same. We support the efforts by the interested parties to find an appropriate solution that is acceptable for all through dialogue and negotiations, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the context of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The question of Kosovo is complex because of sensitive issues such as national reconciliation, which involves the welfare of the people and the protection of the rights of all populations and communities in Kosovo. The opposing parties must refrain from any action that could exacerbate tensions and, instead, prioritize actions that promote peace and trust. That would

undoubtedly result in the pursuit of a final resolution that is satisfactory to all. The Security Council should remain seized of the Kosovo issue and, in that process, should encourage the parties to prioritize a direct and constructive dialogue, while respecting the agreements already reached.

Equatorial Guinea commends and appreciates the tremendous work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo since its establishment and the support that it provides to the communities of Kosovo, the regional and international actors and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe with a view to implementing the mandate of resolution 1244 (1999).

Respect for diversity and the participation of all communities, women and young people in the institutions and peace processes are critical elements to ensure a sustainable peace process. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea would like to encourage the efforts in Kosovo in those areas and the role of UNMIK and the United Nations family in Kosovo in supporting such elements. We also encourage the deployment of all necessary efforts to resolve the problem of the internally displaced persons in Kosovo.

Guaranteeing security and stability in the area requires ongoing efforts to ensure the protection of human rights and to strengthen the rule of law. For that reason, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea shares the concern of Mr. Tanin over the recent crimes and violence in various parts of Kosovo. Such events make it necessary to step up efforts to improve the rule of law, strengthen the judicial institutions and promote development, peace and security in Kosovo.

Although the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union had to be suspended, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea hopes that it will resume as soon as possible and that both sides work in a spirit of mutual understanding and trust to protect the rights and interests of all communities.

Regional cooperation and good-neighbourly relations are crucial for the region. That is why the Republic of Equatorial Guinea hopes that UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo will ensure the rule of law in Kosovo and, as we have already noted, play a very positive role in order to achieve a final resolution that is satisfactory to all.

I conclude my statement by congratulating and paying well-deserved tribute to Special Representative Zahir Tanin for his noble work in Kosovo.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his very useful briefing. I also appreciate the statements of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and of Ambassador Vlora Çitaku.

Poland shares our European partners' assessment with regard to the overall stability of the situation in Kosovo, which does not warrant the current frequency of reporting. We also believe that the time has come for the strategic review of UNMIK, which should lead to the re-evaluation of the level of international presence in Kosovo. Having recognized Kosovo's independence, in 2008, we remain confident that its political institutions are capable of realizing the potential of the country's future, which lies in its integration into the European Union. It will require the full engagement and consensus of the Kosovo political forces and society in order to implement the necessary reforms and meet, to the fullest extent, the obligations under international law.

That brings me to the issue of the attempts to repeal the law on the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office, established to investigate the war crimes committed between 1998 and 2000. In that context, we would like to take positive note of the recent statement by President Thaçi that the special court cannot, and will not, be revoked. We see that as a reassuring sign of the acknowledgement at the highest level of the importance of the unassigned work of those institutions for the country's international and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Nevertheless, we also see room for improvement with respect to good governance and enhancement of the role of women in public life. No efforts should be spared in eradicating corruption and in achieving an efficient and accountable Government, as well as in ensuring the equitable representation of all citizens in the Government. We see that as the best guarantee for prosperity for all.

Lastly, we join others in strongly condemning the recent murder of the Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanović. We would also like to express our faith in the ability of the relevant institutions in Kosovo to

investigate the crime in a professional manner and bring the perpetrators to justice. I would like to conclude by reiterating that Poland views Kosovo as fully capable of managing its own future.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and we share the grave concerns he expressed about the state of affairs in Kosovo. We would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, and his team for their work and objective briefing on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which shows that the persistent serious problems in the province continue and are in urgent need of solutions and of oversight by the international community. We also listened attentively to Ms. Vlora Çitaku's statement.

Ten years ago, at the initiative of Russia, the Security Council convened in this Chamber to respond to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (see S/PV.5821). We gave a warning at the time about the pernicious consequences of that step both for the situation in the province and for regional security, and today it is perfectly clear that the sponsors and executors of the questionable Kosovo project should reflect on the results of that misadventure. The illegal secession, whose forerunner was the NATO aggression of 1999, made a resolution of the Kosovo issue significantly more difficult. The result is that to this day there are still no clear prospects for a settlement and Kosovo continues to be one of the main problems on the regional, European and international agendas. Above all, the flouting of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a Member State continues, in violation of fundamental principles of international law.

The expectations of Pristina's supporters that the number of States recognizing Kosovo's so-called independence would keep going up have proved unfounded. On the contrary, there have recently been calls for retracting that recognition. Kosovo's applications for membership in a number of international organizations have been rejected. On the security front, the potential for serious conflict continues, and any incident is liable to spark an outbreak of violence. On top of that, the province continues to be a comfort zone for recruiting radicals. Attempts to sweep this issue under the rug could have costly consequences for both the Balkans and for Europe as a whole, especially since returning terrorists are fleeing there from Syria and Iraq.

The attempts to cultivate a self-sufficient political system with pretensions to being a legal democratic State have been fruitless. Behind the facade of public institutions we glimpse clannish interests and unresolved contradictions and conflict, and corruption and organized crime are rampant. The moderate political forces have been pushed into the background, and the current authorities, where former Kosovo Liberation Army fighters are running things, are being challenged by even more radical nationalists and those supporting the creation of a greater Albania. In spite of the promises, there has been no economic boom or influx of investments in the province, and as a result the socioeconomic situation is still disastrous. From that point of view, Kosovo remains the most unsuccessful area in the region.

We have always believed that the only solution to the Kosovo problem is a political one, which should be based on dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). Yet for the second year in a row the Brussels dialogue between the parties, in which the European Union took on the role of mediator, is stalled. The main reason for that is the Kosovo Albanians' refusal to fulfil their obligations, and in particular to implement the key First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina of April 2013 on establishing an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo. It is astonishing that the European mediators' attitude to this stagnation is strangely complacent.

In contrast, we note Belgrade's constructive attitude, demonstrating a willingness to continue the dialogue and seek ways to arrive at a long-term settlement of the relations between Serbs and Albanians on a basis of compromise. Unfortunately there has so far been no serious response to those calls from either Pristina or Brussels. At the same time, the signs are increasing that preparations are being made to ramp up pressure on Serbia's leaders in order to compel it to recognize a de facto Kosovo independence. In our view, if the negotiations on Serbia's admission to the European Union are used as a way of cranking up the pressure, that would call into question Brussels' objectivity and impartiality as an intermediary.

The recent murder of Oliver Ivanović, a prominent Kosovo Serb politician, is alarming and has further highlighted the fragility of the situation in the province. Whoever was responsible for the crime, it is a clear reflection of the catastrophically low level of security and law and order in Kosovo, the particular vulnerability of the Serb community and the lack of effective mechanisms for responding to such challenges. Only the courageous decision by Serbia's President Vučić to take the risk of visiting Kosovo, with the aim of giving support to his compatriots, has brought some calm to the situation.

However, it would be premature to suggest that this crisis has been completely dealt with. In particular, we want to emphasize that it is unacceptable to use the current situation as an excuse for enforcing Kosovo Albanian control of the province's Serbian-majority areas. We support Belgrade's calls for a full-fledged investigation into the murder of Ivanović by the international entities in Kosovo and for giving the competent Serbian authorities the opportunity to participate as well, especially given that the possibility of a Serbian police presence in the province is explicitly provided for in resolution 1244 (1999). In our view, special responsibility lies with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which has claimed a key role in recent years in the maintenance of law and order but is now passing the baton to the Kosovo police, within whose purview it says the issue falls.

One wonders who, if not EULEX, is deciding to transfer such functions to the Kosovo police? On what grounds and according to what law has it been done, considering that at issue are powers delegated to EULEX by UNMIK, pursuant to a resolution of the Security Council? Who verified the ability of Kosovo Albanian security forces to objectively investigate crimes against Serbs? Is Pristina actually interested in doing that in any way? Its refusal to provide any of the evidence requested by Belgrade suggests the opposite, including the possibility of an attempt to conceal something. Immediate efforts must be undertaken to rectify these mistakes so as to ensure the most effective, comprehensive and impartial investigation possible and to identify those who planned and carried out the murder.

The passivity of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) is startling, constituting as it does the international security presence in the country, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). Frankly, the meagre reports submitted to the Secretariat do not give us a clear picture of KFOR activities.

We cannot ignore the issue of the investigation into the crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army. It remains unclear when the work of the Specialist Chambers established under the leadership of the European Union in The Hague will begin or if any specific indictments will be made. The fact that the Court's activities depend on the whims of the members of the Assembly of Kosovo, among whom are a number of former fighters, does not inspire great optimism. There is considerable additional evidence of the lamentable state of affairs in the province, some of which is described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/76). It includes a drop in refugee returns, persistent attacks on the homes and property of Kosovo Serbs, arson, acts of material damage and vandalism and attacks on Serbian Orthodox church property. These are the sad legacies of 10 years of Kosovo's independence.

Under the leadership of the United Nations as represented by the Security Council and UNMIK, the international community should continue to closely follow the situation and actively fostering the maintenance of stability and security in the province. In view of all of this, and given the current situation, we believe it would be absolutely inappropriate to raise the question of changing the format and periodicity of the Secretariat's briefings to the Council on Kosovo.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I too would like to begin by thanking Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing today. I would also like to thank Foreign Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku for their statements.

As Ambassador Çitaku pointed out, this month marks 10 years since Kosovo's declaration of independence. Over that decade significant progress has been made in the consolidation of peace and democracy in Kosovo. However, further efforts on the path of progress are needed. We are concerned about recent attempts to undermine the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office. It will be crucial to ensure that Kosovo's political leadership respects its previous commitments in that regard.

Like others, we strongly condemn the murder of Oliver Ivanović. It is vital that the investigation under way be able to run its course. But while Kosovo is

addressing its recent challenges, its European Union (EU) perspective is clear. Irreversible steps are needed, and the Government must resume the dedicated reform agenda that the people of Kosovo so desire. To that end, the Government needs partners across the political spectrum, and we encourage all political actors to engage in a constructive dialogue that will enable the necessary reforms to be speedily implemented.

The future of Kosovo will be saved by courage and committed leadership from Pristina and Belgrade. We welcome the steps being taken to breathe new life into the European Union-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, and we encourage both sides to fully engage and deliver on their respective parts of all agreements reached. Good-neighbourly relations are vital for a stable and prosperous Western Balkans, and the success of the dialogue will also have positive effects on the wider region. In the meantime, it is essential to ensure that the status issue does not hamper Kosovo's European perspective or its membership in international organizations.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and my European Union colleagues highlighted earlier today, yesterday the European Commission adopted its strategy for a credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans. The strategy reaffirms Kosovo's place in Europe and its European Union perspective. It recognizes that the challenges Kosovo faces with regard to the rule of law, relations with its neighbours, and the reform agenda can and must be addressed within the framework of the European Union integration process.

Lastly, almost two decades after its establishment, it is clear that UNMIK has made an invaluable contribution in Kosovo but, looking forward, we hope that the Council will be able to consider the possible prospect of further downsizing the Mission's structure, size and tasks, as well as of adjusting the reporting and briefing period from three to six months.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing and for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/76).

As Ambassador Çitaku recalled, this month marks 10 years since Kosovo became a sovereign State. Let us reflect on the progress that has been achieved in this time. The people of Kosovo have participated in three parliamentary elections since declaring independence in 2008, as well as two countrywide mayoral and municipal elections. Kosovo has also shown solid economic growth and is now among the top 10 countries for starting a business, according to the World Bank's *Doing Business 2018* report, jumping from sixtieth to fortieth place in the report's ranking for ease of doing business. Recent action towards the full integration of Kosovo's judiciary within the European Union-facilitated dialogue underscores a real commitment to progress and stability.

This is not the same country it was 10 years ago when the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was first established. That is not to say that Kosovo is without its challenges. Building a democracy takes time. The genuinely competitive local elections in the majority of municipalities in Kosovo were a welcome sign of healthy democratic competition, although we continue to be concerned about allegations of intimidation in Kosovo Serb municipalities. We also welcome President Hashim Thaçi's public statement on 1 February that Kosovo's Specialist Chambers cannot and will not be abrogated. We hope to see the initiative in the Assembly of Kosovo formally removed in the coming days, ensuring that the important work of the Chambers to maintain justice and the rule of law will continue. We continue to urge the Kosovo authorities to take all possible steps to swiftly resolve the murder of Oliver Ivanović, which has increased local tensions in northern Mitrovica. However, those concerns should not diminish the progress that Kosovo has made.

Kosovo can continue to build on its progress by transitioning UNMIK institutions to Kosovo institutions or other international organizations. While we appreciate UNMIK's years of work in Kosovo, it is time for a leaner, more efficient mission to focus on more tightly defined priorities that take into account all of the progress Kosovo has made in the past 10 years. Kosovo's challenges are far less severe than those that the fledgling nation was facing when UNMIK first arrived, and it therefore does not require a United Nations mission of this size. Moreover, Mr. President, in the Council's open debate yesterday (see S/PV.8175), that you presided over, the United Kingdom called for a Security Council that focuses on present and future challenges. With all of the world's pressing challenges, checking in on Kosovo's good progress in these meetings every three months is simply not a good use of the Council's time.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the long-standing position of the United Kingdom that it is past time for the Council to meet less frequently on this issue.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Let me first thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing. I also thank the representatives from Serbia and Kosovo.

There is always more progress to make, but the conditions in Kosovo have changed markedly since the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo was established, in 1999. And it has changed for the better. That is work which we should be proud of, and it is work that the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia must now seek to build upon. As my colleagues know, peacekeeping reform has been a focus of my work on the Security Council. Central to that reform agenda is the support for political solutions on the ground, which include the parties themselves. Without the political buy-in of the various parties, no real progress can be achieved. What we end up with is an artificial, subsidized peace that is imposed from the outside. But what we want is real peace, which is created by the people who must nurture and sustain it. As Kosovo approaches the tenth anniversary of its independence, we believe that the opportunity is at hand for such a genuine peace. The people of Kosovo are establishing the institutions of self-government.

Last year, a new Administration was formed following free, fair and peaceful democratic elections. A functioning multi-ethnic democracy continues to be strengthened in Kosovo — one that respects the rule of law and the human rights of all. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo has been an important part of that achievement, but now it is time for leaders in Kosovo and Serbia to take their future into their own hands. Both nations' leaders must come together to reach an agreement on the normalization of Kosovo-Serbia relations as soon as possible. Much work has been done, but more progress is needed on crucial issues, such as ending corruption, strengthening the rule of law and laying the foundation for economic growth. For Kosovo and Serbia, normalization is a win-win proposition. Both nations will benefit from expanded ties with one another and with the wider European community.

To facilitate that, the United States reiterates its support for the Brussels dialogue. We appreciate and thank the European Union for its leadership in that effort. Its support and guidance has helped create the opportunity for both sides to make progress towards normalization and lasting peace. In the strongest terms, we urge the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia to take this opportunity. The coming months will be crucial. The stage is set. The benefits are clear. All that is needed is the political will to come together to create a just and lasting peace between Kosovo and Serbia.

A good indication of whether or not Kosovo and Serbia can come together to normalize relations will be how both nations respond to last month's murder of Kosovo-Serb politician Oliver Ivanović. The United States has condemned that killing in the strongest terms. We have offered our support for a full and impartial investigation by Kosovo's police and judicial institutions. The world will be watching to see if that investigation results in accountability for those responsible. We trust that Kosovo's institutions are capable of handling that professionally and impartially to hold those responsible to account without external interference. We call on all parties to avoid dangerous rhetoric at this sensitive time.

Another pillar of our peacekeeping reform agenda is to know what success looks like and, once it is achieved, to set the countries on a path to operate independently of the peacekeeping mission. We believe that we have achieved that measure of success with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. It is long past time to wind down the Mission to preserve scarce United Nations resources. Significant changes are needed in the role of the United Nations in Kosovo. I urge the Council to waste no time in making those changes.

Lastly, we continue to strongly support Kosovo's membership in all relevant international organizations, including the United Nations and INTERPOL. Much has changed during the 19 years since the Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. The time has come for the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia to do what the Mission cannot and what it was never intended to do: to independently and cooperatively build a future of mutual security, prosperity and peace for all the peoples in the region.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me thank Ambassador Tanin, as well as his staff, for their work, the detailed report (S/2018/76) and the briefing. I should like to add that it is also a great personal pleasure to see Ambassador Tanin in person today.

We welcome the close cooperation of Ambassador Tanin with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mogherini,

given the important role of the European Union in Kosovo. I will focus on three points today: first, Kosovo in the Security Council; secondly, the rule of law; and, thirdly, accountability.

With regard to my first point, concerning Kosovo in the Security Council, in our view, the situation in Kosovo today allows for a reduction of the frequency of our discussions in the Council from every three to six months. We also favour changing the format of our discussion to consultations. Furthermore, we call on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to focus on its core tasks, and we look forward to future options concerning its downsizing.

That brings me to my second point, namely, the rule of law. We condemn in the strongest terms, as others have done today, the recent murder of Mr. Ivanović. It is crucial that the perpetrators of that crime be found and justice be done. The rule of law is important for individuals to achieve a sense of closure, but it also has a broader importance for society as a whole.

That brings me to my third point, on accountability. Accountability is an important step on the road to reconciliation in Kosovo's society. For Kosovo's progress to be maintained, its judicial capacities must be accompanied by sincere political will to protect and promote the rule of law. In that light, recent steps undertaken to undermine the authority and legal basis of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Special Prosecution Office are reason for concern. We encourage Kosovo's political leaders to fully act in line with the obligations to which they have committed themselves.

In conclusion, Kosovo is on a positive path, but much remains to be done to ensure accountability for past crimes. In that regard, let me also refer to my European colleagues' statements concerning the statement made on behalf of the European Union yesterday. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has confidence in Kosovo's future, and we call on all the relevant parties to build trust, continue peaceful dialogue and fully implement reached agreements.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his excellent briefing on the situation in Kosovo, and convey to him my country's support for the work that he is doing to reconcile the various Kosovo Serb communities.

As the tenth anniversary of Kosovo's independence nears, we are pleased to note that much progress has been made in various areas in the country. Côte d'Ivoire, which has recognized Kosovo as an independent and sovereign State since 21 September 2011, enthusiastically welcomes the significant progress made in the country. Since 1999, thanks to the support of the international community, in particular by UNMIK, Kosovo has made enormous strides in security, economic and political areas. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work carried out by the staff of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and by NATO troops in Kosovo. My country also welcomes the unremitting commitment of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo to the maintenance of multi-ethnic, transparent and democratic institutions in that country — an effort that dates back to 2008.

I would now like to focus on progress on the political front and to highlight the successful holding of municipal elections of October and November 2017, which demonstrated the country's democratic backbone and the maturity of its institutions. What is more, the broad participation of Kosovo Serb communities in the elections is cause for great optimism. Besides that, the comprehensive implementation of the agreement on the courts for northern Kosovo, concluded by the parties on 10 February 2015, is proof of the Kosovo authorities' recognition of their country's multi-ethnic nature and their desire to consolidate the rule of law. On the institutional front, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the implementation of the agreements on freedom of movement. My country earnestly hopes that the Assembly of Kosovo will definitively enact its draft law on freedom of religion, with a view to guaranteeing that freedom for the Kosovo Serbian community.

Despite my delegation's optimism on the political situation in Kosovo, we continue to be alarmed by the murder on 16 January of Mr. Oliver Ivanović, leader of the civic initiative Serbia, Democracy, Justice. It goes without saying that if such political crimes continue, they will seriously threaten the country's stability and intercommunal unity. The Council must take every appropriate measure to ensure that the perpetrators of the crime are apprehended, tried and, if found guilty, convicted.

We also call for the rapid operationalization of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, which will undoubtedly contribute significantly to

calming the sociopolitical atmosphere and easing tensions. We urge the Government and the Assembly of Kosovo to honour their commitments with regard to the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office. We call on both to respect the agreement signed in 2015 with Montenegro on the demarcation of the two countries' shared border. My delegation is of the view that these commitments are inseparable from those undertaken by the Kosovo Government on 10 November 2017 with regard to the implementation of its European reform agenda.

In conclusion, we hope that the high-level meetings held last year between Pristina and Belgrade political authorities, under the auspices of the European Union High Representative, Ms. Federica Mogherini, will continue this year once again in the interests of reconciliation and a final settlement of the Kosovo question. These meetings, along with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, have contributed to the significant progress made in the areas of human rights and national reconciliation between Kosovo's communities.

Finally, as I should have said at the outset, my delegation also wishes to thank Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Ms. Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States, for their briefings, which have enabled us to understand the reality of the situation in Kosovo.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his informative briefing. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements.

The latest report (S/2018/76) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) reveals problems that arise from the historical baggage of a still-latent conflict. Resolution 1244 (1999) therefore continues to be fully applicable and the supervision of the international community to be necessary. In that understanding, Bolivia once again calls for compliance with the resolution, including full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Serbia. Any attempt to turn the Kosovo security forces into an armed force would therefore run counter to resolution 1244 (1999), which provides for the establishment of a force based on a Council mandate. Bolivia is also concerned about the attempt to pass a law revoking the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. We believe that the rule of law and its impartial application is vital to combating impunity. Those responsible for the commission of war crimes must answer for their actions, regardless of who they are or where they come from. We stress that the victims deserve justice.

We also condemn the assassination of the political leader Oliver Ivanović. We want to highlight the words of Mr. Tanin when he said that this act raises concerns about the possibility of a new wave of political instability. We trust that the authorities and international agencies on the ground will work quickly to apprehend those responsible. We call on political leaders to cooperate and avoid escalating tensions.

Bolivia believes it important to ensure that the parties honour the commitments made in the negotiations sponsored by the European Union. In that connection, we urge them to work for a peaceful solution through dialogue and in line with the obligation to negotiate in accordance with international law. In that regard, Bolivia has called on the parties on several occasions to comply with the provisions of the Brussels Agreement, reached more than four years ago. Unfortunately, the establishment of an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities has yet to take place. Its implementation is key to ensuring the security and human rights of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and essential to achieving a peaceful long-term settlement. We hope that the next report will note progress in this area.

We appreciate the efforts of the European Union and the mediation of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with a view to advancing the implementation of the existing agreements. In that regard, we call on the parties to set start dates for a round of technical dialogue. We believe that these rounds of negotiations are ideal for building mutual trust between the parties. We also note the efforts of the parties to finalize the implementation of the agreement on the judiciary in northern Kosovo.

Bolivia appreciates the work that UNMIK has done in accordance with its mandate. We encourage it to continue working to build trust between the parties, use its good offices to mitigate tensions, employ peaceful means to seek consensus solutions and promote political dialogue and respect for human rights, with a view

to safeguarding peace as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We commend its continuing work through its joint efforts with the municipal authorities and representatives of the province of Kosovo to protect the rights of communities, promote intercommunal reconciliation and inter-ethnic cooperation, facilitate the return of internally displaced persons, highlight the importance of gender equality and provide certification services.

We echo the concerns expressed by the international community about the mandate of the truth and reconciliation commission to be established by the Kosovo authorities. We believe that it should be inclusive and meet the minimum standards that it needs to function.

Finally, we call on the international community to contribute to the trust fund created by the Secretary-General to carry out community assistance projects to benefit the communities of the Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali minorities.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this informative quarterly briefing and are grateful for the comprehensive presentation provided by Mr. Zahir Tanin on the situation in Kosovo and the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We took note of the statements made and information provided by the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

Peru acknowledges the progress made in building stability and economic development in Kosovo, which reflects the commitment of the parties to a process that is supported by the international community, particularly by the Security Council. In this vein, we support the renewed dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union, as well as the implementation of the Brussels agreements. We believe that the parties should continue making progress in this respect in the interests of the peoples concerned and the Balkans region.

We also encourage greater participation of women and young people in political life, especially given the final results of the recent municipal elections. Like others, we deplore and condemn the recent assassination of Serbian leader Oliver Ivanović. We deem it urgent to identify those responsible and bring them to justice, and to ensure the security of vulnerable groups in the northern part of the Kosovo territory.

We are concerned at reports of abuse and arbitrary detentions by Kosovo police. Measures to safeguard the rights of minorities and internally displaced persons must continue to be implemented, and we hope that the community/association of Serb-majority municipalities will soon be established, in accordance with what was agreed in 2013. We deem it vital that there be full cooperation between the Kosovo authorities and the Specialist Chambers in The Hague responsible for atrocities committed by former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Impurity for these crimes cannot be tolerated.

We believe it is important to establish a truth and reconciliation commission. Intercommunal reconciliation that is based on full respect for different identities and customs is a key element for internal cohesion, diversity and cultural wealth. We also commend the initiatives that are being developed with the support of UN-Women to incorporate a gender perspective into various aspects of the Kosovo process.

My delegation wishes to highlight the role being played by UNMIK in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). We believe that efforts to respond to the persistent challenges to the implementation of key aspects of the Brussels agreement must continue to be supported. Nonetheless, so long as the situation remains stable and progress continues to be made in terms of sustainable peacebuilding in Kosovo, the Council must ensure that at the right time, when conditions so allow, an orderly transition takes place from UNMIK to other United Nations entities present in the country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kuwait.

I would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his comprehensive briefing to the Security Council on the report (S/2018/76) pertaining to the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The State of Kuwait reiterates its full support for the Special Representative in the discharge of his duties, and appreciates the vital role of the United Nations during the past period in assisting Kosovo in building its institutions, in accordance with security Council resolutions, especially resolution 1244 (1999). I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia,

as well as Ambassador Vlora Çitaku, and thank both of them for their statements.

The security and political developments in Kosovo without a doubt directly affect regional security and stability. The State of Kuwait applauds the measures taken by Kosovo to achieve more coherent and faster progress in implementing the European reform agenda and its full commitment to the implementation of all the consequent obligations within the framework of the agreed agenda. Kuwait welcomes the free and fair municipal elections held on 22 October 2017, which were the second local elections to be held in Kosovo since the signing of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina, on 19 April 2013.

We appreciate the role played by political leaders and their self-restraint in the aftermath of the assassination of Mr. Oliver Ivanović, as well as the commitment of both Pristina and Belgrade to cooperation in order to prevent political tensions from escalating.

On the other hand, we express our concern at the continued challenges facing the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General before us. Kuwait stresses that the high-level dialogue between the two sides, which is being facilitated by the European Union, remains the most appropriate framework to resolve all pending issues in order to achieve consensual, equitable and sustainable solutions. We also express concern regarding attempts by members of Parliament in Kosovo to repeal the law on supporting the work of the Specialist Chambers and the Prosecutor's Office, which would undermine the credibility of the Parliament. We also call upon all parties in Kosovo to remain fully committed to justice and the rule of law.

In conclusion, we stress the importance of the continued efforts of the international community to urge Pristina and Belgrade to overcome their differences and to achieve consensual, equitable and sustainable solutions that are acceptable to both parties and lay the foundation for peace and stability in the region. UNMIK should continue to cooperate constructively with Pristina and Belgrade and all communities in Kosovo in order to enhance security, stability and respect for human rights.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.